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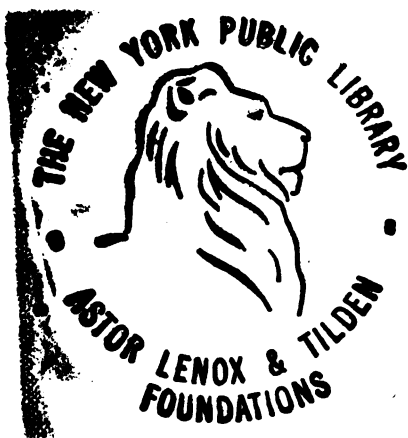


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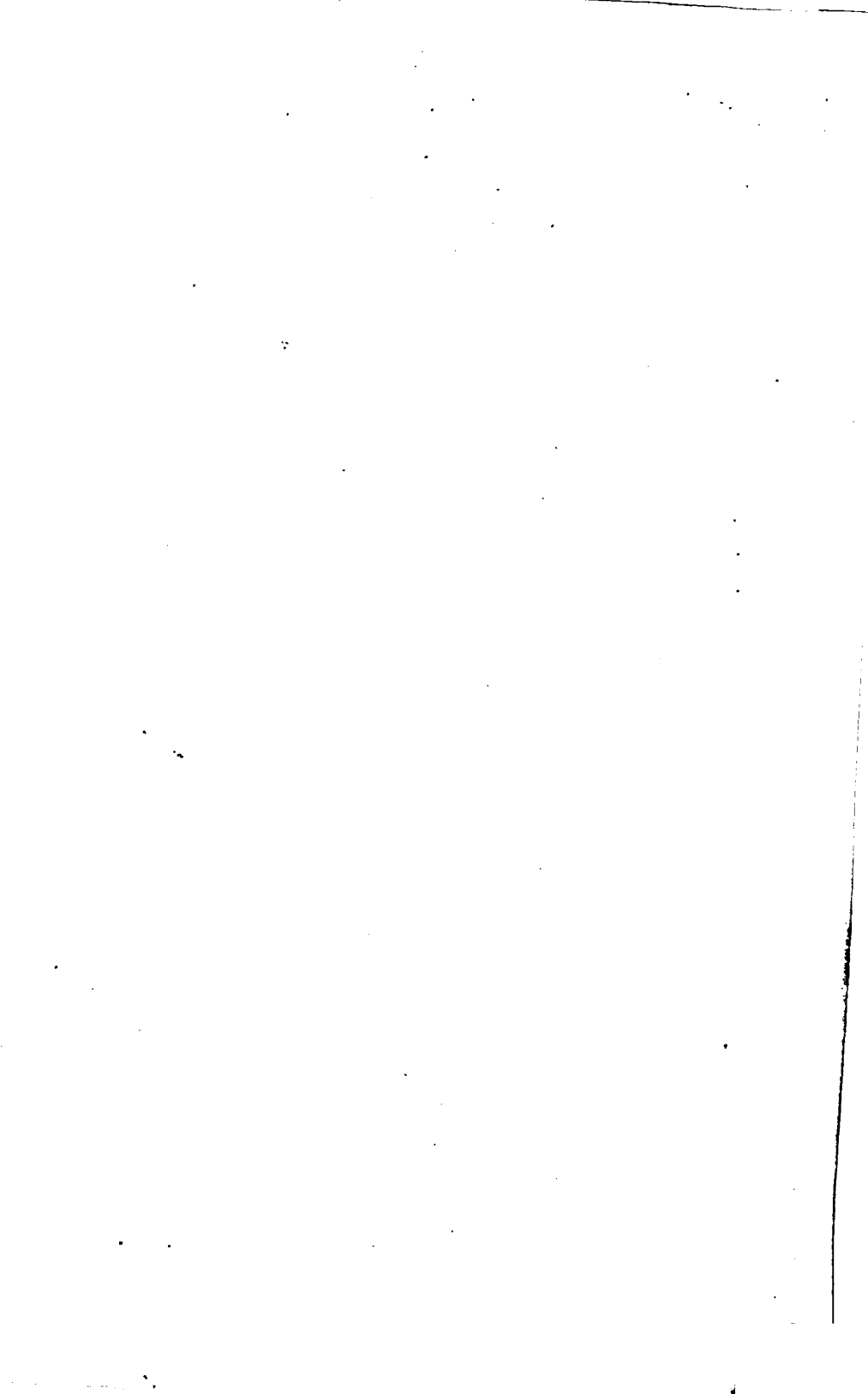
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CASTLE BYTHAM
(FROM THE CASTLE HILL)

The History
OF
CASTLE BYTHAM;
ITS ANCIENT FORTRESS AND MANOR,
Its Feudal Lords,
VAUDEY ABBEY, &c., &c.

BY
THE REV. JOHN WILD, B.A.

“I do love these ancient ruins. We never tread on them but we set our foot upon some reverend history.”—WEBSTER.

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Dedication.

TO THE INHABITANTS OF CASTLE BYTHAM,

THIS ATTEMPT TO COLLECT THE

HISTORY OF THEIR ANCIENT CASTLE

AND ITS FEUDAL LORDS,

TOGETHER WITH SOME OTHER FACTS CONNECTED WITH THEIR

Parish and Church,

IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY THEIR

OBEDIENT SERVANT IN CHRIST,

JOHN WILD.

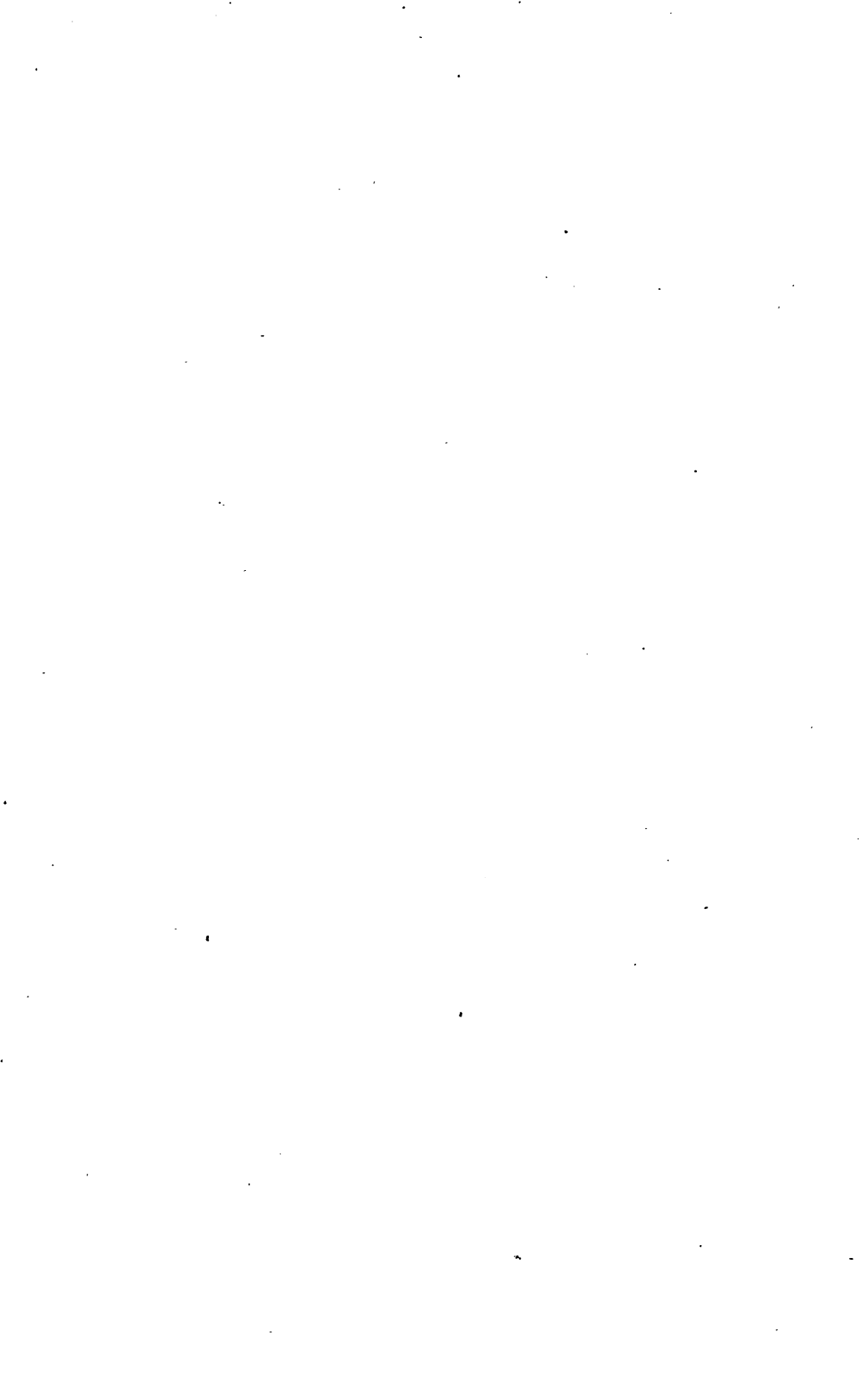
THE VICARAGE,

September, 1870.

Aug. 12, 1977
Hindley

PREFACE.

THESE pages had their origin in a natural desire to know something of the most interesting and conspicuous object in the village in which I was called for a time to minister. They grew as the subject unfolded, leading me from one field of inquiry to another, and are printed in compliance with the repeated request of the parishioners. I am aware that, as a history, they are far from perfect. Still, when it is remembered that not even a tradition of the ancient Castle or its lords remained in the locality, that all ordinarily accessible accounts were of the most meagre description, and that what is here presented to the reader has been gathered little by little from multitudinous sources, it is hoped that these gleanings may add something to the general stock of local knowledge, may foster a feeling of veneration for the antiquities of the parish, and may help to create an intelligent interest in its past and future.



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BYTHAM CASTLE.



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE village of Castle Bytham is pleasantly situated about eight miles west of Bourn, and nine north north-west of Stamford. A well-defined valley stretching from west to east is met by two others converging from a north and north-westerly direction. The ground where these valleys unite forms an irregular triangular depression. Beginning on the southern eminence, where the church stands, the village descends the slope with picturesque irregularity, spreads itself over the low ground, and then, narrowing to a single street, runs some distance towards the north.

North-east and east of the village the ground rises with a bold and even sweep. From this high background a single abrupt spur juts out towards the centre of the village. This is the Castle Hill—an object which must command the attention of every passer-by.

In ordinarily wet seasons a little stream flowing down the northern valley is met at the foot of the Castle Hill by another, proceeding from the west. But the body of water thus formed and augmented by the springs in the village is, I am told, much less than formerly. The difference is accounted for partly by the drainage of the land, which carries off

the superabundant water at once, and partly by the supply of some of the springs being diverted from their natural course, and turned into disused stone pits.

Such is the site of Castle Bytham. I have only to add that the village contains a Church, a Wesleyan chapel, an endowed school, a Castle Hill, and the reputation of having once possessed, or rather of having been intended to possess, a Monastery, and all its principal features will have been enumerated.

No one, however, can carefully examine Castle Bytham without feeling that it has a past. Such names as St. Martin's, Park House, Morkere Wood, and Castle Hill, carry the thoughts of the inquiring stranger into times gone by. And if he can learn nothing of what these names indicate from those who live on the spot, and have them constantly on their lips, he is at least disappointed.

We must not imagine the day coming when every village oracle shall be versed in local history. Still, if he could tell who built the parish church in which he worships, or what powerful baron raised the strong fortress whose grey keep once frowned on wood and stream alike, it would add to the interest he feels in his native place. And if, further, he could recount the leading facts connected with his village, and mention the names and deeds of men who once lived there, and have left their mark for good or evil on the history of their country, it would tend to make him a wiser and perhaps a better man. He would learn to profit by their experience. The good rewarded and the evil punished would speak to him of an overruling Providence; and thus his daily surroundings would become daily monitors. Man's highest knowledge is to know himself. In no way, save from God's Word, can he learn this so well as by the study of history; and from no other history is he so likely to learn it as from that which blends in a manner with his daily life and

occupation. Local history has another advantage. It embraces a smaller area; it deals with fewer characters; and therefore is more likely to enter into those *minutiæ* which make it instructive. It can analyse the feelings and motives of men as well as record their doings, and by linking effects to their proper causes, can teach the present generation from those of the past.

It is not difficult to see how the investigation of a single locality draws the mind towards remote ages. A quaint name, an earthwork, or a few old stones, will serve to connect the place with Anglo-Saxon, or even early British history. And happily balanced is that mind which is never tempted to draw too largely on the imagination in dealing with such interesting relics. Many local historians err in this direction. Should I prove guilty of the same fault, it will be unwillingly and unconsciously.

We will begin with the name *Castle Bytham*.

Originally this village was known as West Bytham to distinguish it from Little, or, as it was then called, East Bytham. When, however, the Castle was built, the distinguishing appellation West gave place to Castle, and it has ever since been known as Castle Bytham.

No part of these researches has cost me more trouble than the attempt to learn the origin and meaning of the word *Bytham*. Even those who have made place-names their special study, differ widely about it. But this difference relates only to the first part of the word. About the last part, *ham*, or *am*, there is no difference. This is Saxon for home, or village. With respect to Byth, I simply give the most probable etymologies that have been suggested :

1. Byth is supposed to represent the name of a Saxon chieftain who with his followers obtained a settlement here. Thus Bytham is Byth's Village.

2. Instead of dividing the word as above, a second

suggestion makes it Byt-ham ; or, The Commander's Village.

3. A third, led by a peculiar spelling in Domesday, Bintham, supposes that its ancient wheat-growing fame indicated a high state of general cultivation, and the name Bintham, or Byntham, "cultivated village," originated in the form of a bye-word, not of reproach, but of admiration, and was ultimately pronounced and spelt Bytham.

4. A fourth makes it By-the-am ; that is, The Village by the Water.

5. There is yet a fifth interpretation. At first sight this may appear far-fetched ; it traces the word, however, to a British origin, and rests on a more tangible basis than any of the others. It begins by reminding us that connected with the worship of the ancient Britons were certain bell-shaped mounds, or high places, known as Dhals. When these Dhals assumed a crescent or horseshoe shape they were called Bö-dhals, Bö denoting a bend or curve. Our Castle Hill has every appearance of, and is believed by some persons to have been originally, one of these Bö-dhals. Ham, or am, denoting a village, is the Saxon form of the Celtic word *öm*, which signifies water, or a marshy flat. Thus the British name for Bytham would be Bö-dhal-öm, *i.e.*, The Temple by the Water. When the Saxons settled here the name was retained, but naturally abbreviated in pronunciation and written in their own characters. Bö was represented by By^{3e}, which had the same meaning, and in composition with dhal would be written By ; Dhal in the same way would be shortened to *dh* and written *ȝ*, and thus we should get Byȝam, or Bytham.

British dominion was succeeded by Roman. Was Bytham known to these subduers of the world ? Undoubtedly it was. At Market Overton, about seven miles westward, was a Roman settlement ; and at Little Bytham is a brickyard belonging to the late Lord Willoughby D'Eresby, which was undoubtedly

worked by that people. It is impossible, then, that Castle Bytham could be unknown to them ; but as yet, I am not aware of any direct evidence of Roman occupation or workmanship.

Next came the Anglo-Saxons. That they found their way to Bytham, and formed a settlement here, cannot be doubted. Still I find no mention of the place in the history of that people. I look at the Anglo-Saxon map. North of Stamford is a blank space. In the midst of that space Bytham ought to be, and is not. All this is disappointing. But the conclusion I draw from it is, that Bytham was neither the scene of a great battle, nor thrown into the foreground of history by any unusual circumstance. Its inhabitants for the most part dwelt quietly, and by patient industry made their settlement famous for its *wheat*, as will be seen hereafter.

The only remains of Anglo-Saxon handiwork that I have met with in the village, are three portions of a St. Cuthbert's Cross, of which a description will be given in the Addenda.

From "Domesday" we learn the name of the last Saxon owner of Bytham. This was no other than the distinguished Morcar, or Morkere, Earl of Northumberland, and brother-in-law of King Harold. I must not omit to add that Earl Morkere was also grandson to Leofric, the great Mercian Earl, and his wife the no less famous Lady Godiva ; and that Godiva herself was a Lincolnshire lady, and one of the Thorold family. Our county, and, in some little degree, our village, thus claim an interest in the name so celebrated in Coventry tradition.

Earl Morkere's name still lingers amongst us. In the west of the parish is a large wood, known as Morkere Wood. Perhaps it was one of the Earl's favourite hunting-grounds in his earlier, better, and happier days.

In the year 1066, William, Duke of Normandy, landed on our shores, and won the crown of England.

History tells us that, had Morkere and his brother Eadwine, who was then Earl of Mercia, seconded the noble efforts of their brother-in-law, King Harold, there is reason to believe that our country would never have been conquered. They hung back, however, at the critical moment. A mean jealousy of Harold's greatness animated them. He had been freely and unanimously elected to the vacant throne on the death of Edward the Confessor, to which they probably imagined that they had a prior claim, and they left him to defend it as best he might. Their envy cost them dearly. They had most likely flattered themselves that when Harold was overcome, they could beat back the invaders and win the crown for themselves. If they ever seriously entertained this idea it was quickly dispelled. With the death of Harold every prospect of withstanding the victorious arms of William vanished. Their only chance was to make their submission, which they did, and were allowed to retain their lands, &c. The Conqueror, however, was too wary to trust them far out of his sight. Wherever he went they were kept in close attendance, till, weary of their polite imprisonment, they privately withdrew from court and broke into open rebellion. Eadwine was murdered by one of his own followers, and Morkere betook himself to the Isle of Ely, where his uncle Hereward was making a last brave stand for the liberties of his country. By constructing a bridge two miles long, the Normans obtained possession of the island; Morkere was taken prisoner, and all his estates were confiscated. William, when on his death-bed, gave orders that all his prisoners should be liberated; and among them Morkere was restored to freedom. But no sooner had William Rufus seized the crown than he was again imprisoned, and in the end murdered by some of his own retinue.

CHAPTER II.

WE now arrive at the period when historical documents begin to abound.

Claiming our first attention is that most venerable record known as "Domesday Book," which was compiled by order of the Conqueror, and contains an account of nearly all the lands in the country, with the names of the persons who then held them, and also of their previous owners, &c. It was begun in the year 1080, and finished in about six years. Lincolnshire was not surveyed till 1085, a circumstance which must be borne in mind.

The account of Castle Bytham, then called Westbitham, is as follows :—

"In Westbitham Morcar formerly had 9 carucates* of land to tax. Land (in the place) the same number of carucates. There Drogo now has 3 carucates in demesne,† and 24 sochmen‡ of his mediety of land, and 7 villains§ with 8 carucates. There 7 foreigners have 2 carucates and 3 iron forges, of the value of 40 shillings and 8 pence. Feeding wood throughout the place, 1½ league long and the same in width, and 60 acres of meadow. In the time of King Edward the Confessor its value was £19 10s. Now it is £10."

"Godefrid de Cambrai, Lord of Creeton, has in wood at Westbitham 40 acres for 8 pence."

* A carucate, or plough-land, contained about 100 acres.

† Demesne, the land which the lord kept in his own name and occupation, as distinguished from that which was let to tenants.

‡ Sochmen were tenants who held land for some small services of husbandry performed to the lord.

§ The *villains* were labourers bound to the service of a particular lord, but not slaves in the sense of the Roman law.

The first thing in this which arrests our attention is the name of the new owner—Drogo de Beverer, or, as it is more commonly spelt, Brewere. Before A.D. 1085, Bytham had become part of his possessions.

Drogo was one of the Flemish followers of the Conqueror. And in addition to the hand of his half-sister, William bestowed upon him large grants of land.¹ He had the whole of that part of Yorkshire called Holderness, and thirty-five lordships in Lincolnshire.

¹ Dugdale's "Baronage," vol. i. p. 468.

Next, we cannot help noticing the remarkable statement about the seven foreigners and their three iron forges. Had they been *smelting furnaces* there would have been no difficulty. But the circumstance appeared altogether so unusual that Sir Henry Ellis, in his introduction to "Domesday,"² thinks it worthy of special mention. He does not, however, account for their presence, or suggest any reason for it.

² P. 44.

Can we assign a reason?

"Castles walled with stone, and designed for residence as well as defence, are said by Grose to be, for the most part, of no higher antiquity than the Conquest."³

³ "Introduction to Domesday," p. 67.

In fact, we owe the introduction of them almost exclusively to the Norman Invasion. And as a matter of necessity, wherever these frowning piles were being erected, foreigners would be employed upon them.

Have we, then, any grounds for thinking that Bytham Castle was at that time in course of erection? I believe we have. In A.D. 1071, Eadwine and Morkere broke out into open rebellion. Their uncle, the indomitable Hereward, was chief of a brave band, and for a long time made Bourne his headquarters. Part of Morkere's land was given to Drogo, the Manor of Bytham included, as we have seen. Now, with such dangerous neighbours in close proximity, what so natural for Drogo as to build a

stronghold to defend his new acquisition? And though Morkere was shortly afterwards taken prisoner, and kept in close confinement, Hereward and his dauntless followers for years afterwards held their own against the Norman spoilers and oppressors.

So far the foreigners, the forges, and the state of the district all suggest the building of a castle at Bytham. And some confirmation of this opinion may be drawn from the fact that Drogo adopted the same means of protecting his Yorkshire possessions, and built there the Castle of Skypse. Still, these indications are not proofs. But if I can show further that, immediately after the flight of Drogo, a castle was standing, there can hardly be a doubt remaining as to the time when it was built, and by whom. Camden writes:⁴ "*Bitham Castle*, which, as we find in an old pedigree, was given by William the First to Stephen, Earl of Albemarle and Holderness." An eminent antiquarian, in a letter to the *Stamford Mercury*, 13th October, 1858, has the following:—"In the reign of William the Conqueror, Holywell was possessed by Odo, Earl of Albemarle and Holderness, who resided at Castle Bytham." And Thomas Stapleton, in his "*History of the Holy Trinity Priory, York*,"⁵ Tom. 38. speaking of the foundation of Vaudy Abbey, says, "By William, Count of Aumarle, a convent of monks from Fountains had been seated in the vicinity of his *Castle of Bytham*, in Lincolnshire." *

Drogo de Brewere did not long retain his possessions in this country. By some unhappy chance he killed his wife, and would have fled the country at once, but lacked money to do so.⁶ Still, fly he must. In his extremity, thinking the boldest policy the wisest, he hastened to the King, and, concealing his misfortune, told him he had a great desire to

* It is mentioned in the M.S. list of castles, &c., in the time of Henry II., in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. (N.E., Bib. Bod., E. 2, p. 17.)

⁴ "Britannia," vol. i. p. 560.

⁵ Tom. 38.

⁶ Dugdale's "Baronage," vol. i. p. 468.

return to Flanders, and asked for money to enable him to do so. The King lent him the money, and by the time he heard the truth of the matter, Drogo was far out of his reach.

According to some accounts, the Manor of Bytham was next bestowed on Odo, Earl of Albemarle, Bishop of Bayeux, half-brother to the Conqueror, and husband to Adeliza, William's niece. Thus in White's *Lincolnshire*,⁷ "In the time of William the Conqueror this manor was the property of Odo, Earl of Albemarle, who. . . . obtained a grant of the Castle and adjoining territory for the support of his infant son Stephen." White has evidently borrowed from Burke and Dugdale, but has omitted part of their statement, which is as follows:—"Holderness⁸ upon this occasion (the flight of Drogo) being given to Odo, and at that time was a barren country, bearing no other grain but oats; so soon as his wife had brought him a son, whom he named Stephen, he entreated the King to give him some land which would bear wheat, whereby he might be better able to nourish his nephew, the King therefore granted unto him the lordship of Bytham, in Lincolnshire." Against this must be placed Camden's account:⁹ "Bitham Castle, which, as we find in an old pedigree, was given by William the First to *Stephen*, Earl of Albemarle and Holderness, to enable him to feed his son, as yet a little infant, with fine white bread; for at that time nothing was eaten in Holderness but oat-bread." It is a great pity this author does not mention the pedigree from which he gathered his information. He does not, however, and so we are left to balance probabilities between him and Dugdale as best we may.

This can only be done by a comparison of dates.

Drogo, as we have seen, held the Manor in A.D. 1085. But Odo was at this time a prisoner, and remained so till the death of William. For, having

⁷ P. 714.

⁸ Dugdale's
"Baronage,"
vol. i. p. 60.

⁹ "Britannia,"
vol. i. p. 560.

allowed his ambition to aspire to the Papacy, he was on the point of secretly departing for Rome in 1082, and carrying with him an immense accumulation of riches, when the King discovered his plans, arrested and imprisoned him. No power or influence could procure his release till William lay on his death-bed in the autumn of 1087. There appears, therefore, no probability that Bytham could ever have been given to Odo by William the Conqueror. And if not, we must accept Camden's account as the true one; believe that while Odo was a prisoner, Stephen had a son born, and calling him William after his royal uncle, obtained the grant of our wheat-growing Bytham to nourish the child's tender stomach.*

We have the satisfaction of knowing, supposing the above account to be correct, that Bytham wheat proved nourishing food indeed. The youngster grew in years and bulk, and became doubly famous. For noted as he afterwards was for warlike deeds and lavish benevolence, he was still more noted for his unusual corpulency! History always speaks of him as William le Gros, *i.e.*, *The Fat William*.

In the contest between William Rufus and his brother Robert for the crown of England, Odo, now released from confinement, and his son Stephen, arrayed themselves on opposite sides. Odo supported Robert, and Stephen as firmly adhered to William. Consequently the son was confirmed in his father's titles and possessions, and retained also the Manor of Bytham.

After peace was made between the rival brothers, Earl Stephen joined the Crusade, and won renown in the East.

* For a long time I was unable to obtain any clue as to the locality of the ancient Wheatfield. At length an old parochial account-book cleared up the mystery. It lay chiefly to the west of the Parish, on both sides of the South Witham Road, and included Stocken Gate, Little Haw Dale, Sales Dale, Bull-piece balk, and Mortar-piece balk. Some land adjoining the Fishpools was also known as Wheatfield.

I find only one other circumstance which directly connects his name with Bytham. His mother, Adeliza, founded the Monastery of Albemarle in Normandy. This he enriched with various lands and tythes in France, and with a number of churches and tythes in England. Among these was the Church of Bytham, with all its appendages. The practical effect of this gift, which was made in A.D. 1115, was to transfer the endowments, originally belonging to our church to a foreign monastery, leaving the monks to provide for the spiritual oversight of the parish, which they usually did by engaging a curate at the cheapest possible rate, or sending one of their own monks from time to time.

This Stephen married Hawise, daughter of Ralph de Mortimer and Milicent his wife, and by her had three sons and four daughters. The names of the daughters are not known. The sons were :

William, surnamed Le Gros, his successor.
Stephen.
Ingelram.

William, surnamed *Le Gros*, the third Earl of Albemarle, was a person of great note. One of the first incidents related of him gives us some idea of his power, and of his readiness to use it when provoked. William Fossard, of Mountferrant Castle, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, a minor, was in ward to the King, and by him committed to the guardianship of William le Gros. This young gentleman offered an unpardonable insult to one of the Earl's sisters. In revenge, the Earl demolished his castle, forced him to fly the country, and kept him out of his estates as long as he, the Earl, lived.¹⁰

¹⁰ Camden's
"Britannia," p.
886.

In 1136 this nobleman founded the Abbey of Meaux, in Holderness. As there are some facts connected with the founding of this Abbey, which may tend to throw light on the removal of the Cistercian Priory from Castle Bytham, it will be well to mention them here.

Earl William, like many others at that period, made a vow to go to Jerusalem. As time crept on, age and corpulency presented serious and ever increasing difficulties to the fulfilment of his vow. What wonder, then, if he became troubled and distressed? A religious vow unfulfilled ought not to sit lightly on any man's conscience. And as the Earl had a conscience, his grief weighed heavily on his spirits. Fortunately, at that time, there happened to be among the monks of Fountains Abbey, one, Adam by name, who was "a person of singular prudence and great fame." This man had frequent opportunities of seeing the Earl, and not only divined his trouble, but traced it to its true source—the unfulfilled vow. Adam's diagnosis was perfect. Now for the remedy. He prescribed that the Earl should found a monastery of the Cistercian Order, on condition of receiving the Pope's absolution from his vow. The terms were accepted. And here comes the little incident which especially interests us. Where was the monastery to be built? Adam undertook to search and see. And search he did, till he found the most lovely and fertile spot on his patron's Yorkshire estates. "Seeing this territory,¹¹ now called Mieux, to be well adorned with woods and groves, and environed with lakes and waters, as also the soil was very fruitful, he concluded that it would be the most fit and proper place for that purpose; and ascending that part thereof then called Our Lady's Hill, he went to the top of it, and fixed his staff in the ground, saying, This place shall be called the King's Court, the Vineyard of Heaven, and the Gate of Life." The Earl, however, did not part with it without a pang. He had just obtained it in exchange for other lands to enclose for a park; for he had "an extraordinary love to it, by reason of its situation."

¹¹ Dugdale's
"Baronage,"
vol. i. p. 62.

Next we find William le Gros conspicuous as a general. He was chief of the great nobles who defeated the Scots at Northallerton, A.D. 1138. It is

amusing to see the devices then adopted to inspire the soldiers with courage. Thurstan, Archbishop of York, caused a famous standard to be erected in the English camp, displaying the banners of St. Peter, St. John of Beverley, and St. Wilfrid of Ripon, with the sacred host. Hence the ground on which the battle was fought, has ever since been called Standard Hill. Camden tells us ¹² "that the northern people brought to the field *in his cradle*, the young Earl of Albemarle, the only respected heir of those parts, and placed him by the standard, hoping thereby to animate the people." And, as if these were not enough, Ralph, Bishop of Durham, delivered an exciting oration. The result was a most signal victory for the English. For his gallantry in this engagement, the Earl of Albemarle was rewarded with the Earldom of Yorkshire. It will, however, be more convenient for us to retain his old title.

¹² "Remains,"
p. 248.

In the next year, 1139, his lordship founded, perhaps as a thankoffering for his recent honours, the Abbey of Thornton, near Barton-on-Humber, in this county.

Two years later he was with King Stephen at the siege of Lincoln. This was a disastrous enterprise on the royal side; for the King was taken prisoner, and the reputation of some of his generals—our Earl especially—was made exceedingly free with. Dugdale gives currency to a report, that it was the cowardly flight of this baron that exposed Stephen to his severe reverse. But however that may be, other and worse crimes than cowardice were openly laid to his charge. We hope therefore Earl Robert, the opposing general, was either misinformed, or for the moment forgot the regard due to truth, when he said: "There is also come out the Earl of Albemarle,¹³ a man of singular constancy in crime, ready for daring evil, and slow to relinquish it; whom his wife, taking to flight, has abandoned by reason of his intolerable filthiness."

¹³ "Hoveden,"
vol. i. p. 240.

In 1147, Earl William brought from Fountains

Abbey, in Yorkshire, a number of Cistercian monks, to found a priory at Castle Bytham; but more of this hereafter.

He married Cicely, the daughter of William Fitz Duncan (nephew of Malcolm King of Scotland), by Alice, daughter of Robert de Romely, Lord of the honour of Skipton, in Craven, &c., by which marriage he enjoyed as her inheritance, all that part of Yorkshire called Craven. It appears that his son died early, for he left by this lady only two daughters,

Hawyse, who married first, William de Mandeville, Earl of Essex; secondly, William de Fortibus; and thirdly, Baldwin de Bertune, Earl of the Isle of Wight.

Amicia, or, as some call her, Cicely, the wife of Eston, by whom she had a son, Ranulph, whose son, John, was father of John de Eston, or Aston, who, as right heir after Aveline de Fortibus, claimed in 6 Edward I. the Earldom of Albemarle, and had certain lands in Thornton, to the value of £100 per annum, assigned to him to release his right therein.

William le Gros died in the year 1179 or 1180, and was buried in his Abbey at Thornton.

William de Mandeville, Earl of Essex, next succeeded to the title in right of his wife, and thus became Earl of Albemarle.

To this nobleman we owe the introduction to our parish of a family whose name long mingles with the most important events of its history, and some of whose collateral descendants probably still survive in the locality. From the "*Rotuli Hundredorum*,"¹⁴ 3 Ed. I., m. 1.,¹⁵ Linc. we learn that William de Mandeville granted possession of the Manor of Bytham with its appendages to William de Colville, for two knights' fees and a half.* The date of the transaction is not given. But as

* "William the Conqueror divided the whole kingdom, except the royal demesnes, into about 60,000 parcels of nearly equal value, called knights' fees. Most of these were bestowed on his Norman followers under tenure of military service, that is, for each knights' fee the service of a soldier on horseback was due when required by the King's summons. According to some each knights' fee contained about 800 acres; according to others, 680. Lord Coke says, that by the Act or Writ, 1 Ed. II., 1307, it was measured by the value of £20 per annum, and not by any certain content of acres." (Co. Litt., 69, a., "Tytler's Elements," by Turner, p. 311.)

William de Mandeville succeeded to the Earldom of Albemarle about the year 1180, and died in 1190, it must be placed somewhere between those dates.

After the death of William de Mandeville in 1190, his widow Hawise espoused *William de Fortibus*, who in her right became Earl of Albemarle and Lord of Holderness. We need only record of him that he was constituted, by King Richard I., one of the admirals of the fleet, in which that monarch sailed towards Jerusalem; and that his lordship died in 1194, leaving a son and heir bearing his own name. But as Hawise was in her own right heir to the earldom, and afterwards married

Baldwine de Bertune, Earl of the Isle of Wight, the young William de Fortibus was postponed to Baldwin in the enjoyment of the Earldom of Albemarle. This Baldwin died in 1212 without issue.

The three-times-widowed Hawise still survived. According to the law of that period, the King had the right to give her in marriage to any other suitor who might solicit him. And the oftener rich heiresses married the better for the royal exchequer. All property was supposed to be vested in the King. The great barons who held their lands *in capite* were in fact the King's tenants. They retained their possessions by discharging certain stipulated duties, and at their death their lands reverted, or escheated, to the King. The next heir to the deceased was allowed to succeed to the titles and estates on the payment of a fine. And when a female tenant *in capite* married, a similar rule obtained. The estates devolved upon the husband, and he had to pay the usual fine to be confirmed in them by the King. Rich ladies seldom had the privilege of choosing their own husbands. The King, or those to whose wardship he had committed them, gave them in marriage as their whim or self-interest dictated. A partisan to be enriched, or a promising knight to be made more powerful, was a sufficient inducement for a rich widow to be

given in marriage seven times over if opportunity offered.

Hawise had learnt wisdom. Conscious of her precarious position, and wishing both for her own and her son's sake to avoid further matrimonial complications, she hit upon the happy expedient of proposing to pay a fine to the King for permission to retain her estates, without being compelled to marry again. Here is her charter of indemnity :

"John, by the grace of God, &c.,¹⁵ to all his bailiffs and faithful subjects, health. Know ye that Hawise, Countess of Albemarle, has paid to us a fine of 5,000 marks, for the possession of her inheritance and dowries, with all that belongs to them, and that she should not be bound to marry again ; if so be that she desires to marry again, be this her authority to do so. Nevertheless, she paid us the before-named 5,000 marks to quit our right to dispose of her, and we have caused it to be enrolled. Witnesses, P., Bishop of Winchester ; W., Earl of Salisbury, our brother ; G., son of Peter, Earl of Essex, &c., &c. Given, &c., at Windsor, Nov. 3, in the fourteenth year of our reign."

¹⁵ "Rot. Chart."
¹⁴ John, m. 3.

By this time young William de Fortibus must have been eighteen or twenty years of age ; and another marriage would have postponed his chance of succeeding to the titles and estates for an indefinite period. Any terms, therefore, which the mother could make to avert this, and prevent another lord from being placed over her son and herself, she would gladly agree to. Her life, however, was not spared much longer ; for only two years later, before May, 1215, her son was confirmed by the King in all the lands which accrued to him through his mother. We have no particulars of Hawise's death beyond the fact that she was buried at Thornton Abbey by the side of her father.

CHAPTER III.

WE must now turn our attention to the Colviles, who, as before stated, were settled at Bytham by William de Mandeville, between the years 1180 and 1190.

The first mention I find of the name is in the "Roll of Battle Abbey;" the family, therefore, came over with the Conqueror.

Dugdale begins the pedigree with a Philip de Colvile, who is *assumed* to be the father of the one who became the *first Baron of Bytham*.¹

¹ "Baronage," vol. i. p. 626.

In the reign of Stephen this Philip built the Castle of Drax, in Yorkshire, and fortified it against the King, who speedily invested and demolished it. In the next reign (21 Henry II.) he was one of the witnesses to the agreement between the King of England and the King of Scotland, by which the last-named monarch bound himself to be faithful to Henry. But between this man and the William de Colvile who obtained the Lordship of Bytham, comes *another William*. For in 1157 (3 Henry II.) the Sheriff of Lincoln rendered an account of one mark

² Rot. Pip., 85. for William de Colvile.² And in the 14th of the same reign this William held of the Barony of Hugh Wake two knights' fees, and one of Walter Deincourt in the county of Lincoln.³ He married Agatha, who was probably of the Albin family, of whom the Colviles afterwards held Muston and Normanton. We have no certain mention of his death. Most probably it took place in A.D. 1198, since in that year (10 Richard I.) our William de Colvile paid thirty marks for the livery of his property, consisting in Lincolnshire of fifteen knights' fees in Binbrook

³ Lib. Niger. 266, 268, and Pedigree in Mr. Ross's collection, vol. xvi.

and Aburne.⁴ Bytham is not mentioned, and therefore did not, as we know, descend to him from his father. ⁴ Rot. Pip.
¹⁰ R. I. Linc.

Peck, in his "History of Stamford,"⁵ speaks of William de Colvile as "Lord of Bitam," as early as February, 1174. Quoting from Dugdale,⁶ he writes: ⁵ Lib. v. sect. vi.
⁶ Mon. Ang.
Tom. ii. p. 380.
"Richard Humet, Lord of Stamford, at the request of William de Colvile, Baron of Bitam, a person highly respected by him, gave St. Andrew's Church in Stamford, whereof he was patron, to be appropriated to the nuns of St. Michael." This date settles William de Colvile at Bytham ten years earlier than the previous one. I was anxious to reconcile the discrepancy, and fix the precise time when his connection with the parish began. It was not difficult. On turning to Dugdale, I found that Peck was accurate in every point save one—nothing is there said about "Lord of Bitam." I infer, then, that William de Colvile was living in the neighbourhood of Stamford, and we have seen that at that time his father had property in the county, but we have no grounds whatever for believing that his connection with Bytham began before A.D. 1180.

Peck subsequently recites three deeds of gift from Ascelina de Waterville to the nuns of St. Michael's in Stamford, the first of which was witnessed by

Thomas de Colewill
Philip de Colewill
Geoffry de Colewill
William de Colewill
Robert de Colewill
Ralph de Colewill

the second by

Lord Thomas de Colevill
Geoffry de Colevill
Ralph de Colevill
Philip de Colevill

and the third by

William de Colevill
Ralph de Colevill
Richard de Colevill

Unfortunately, none of the deeds are dated. They serve, however, to show that the family was becoming numerous.

We will now follow the fortunes of William de Colvile. On him, some time between the years 1180 and 1185, William de Mandeville, Earl of Albemarle, bestowed the Manor of Bytham, for two and a half knights' fees. We are enabled to fix the latter date by a gift which will afterwards be named.

The Lordship of Bytham, as previously held by the Earls of Albemarle, consisted of Castle Bytham, Little Bytham, Counthorpe, Careby, Holywell, and Aunby. Of these the two Bythams, Counthorpe, and Careby were transferred to William de Colvile, and thenceforth constituted the Manor of Bytham. Holywell and Aunby remained in the Earl's possession. For later on, when Walter de Colvile held two knights' fees in Bytham and elsewhere, of ancient fee, the Earl of Albemarle held Holywell of ancient fee, as part of his barony.⁷ Aunby was part of Holywell.

⁷ "Testa de Nevill," p. 307. Temp. Hen. III. and Ed. I.

Besides Bytham and the fifteen knights' fees in Binbrook and Aburne (Auburn) already mentioned, William de Colvile held one knight's fee in Swinstead, under Andrew Lutterell, Lord of Irnham,⁸ and one in Creeton under Baldwin Wake.

⁸ Abbrev. Plac. 83.

The first recorded act of William de Colvile as owner of Bytham was to bestow on the Knights' Templars four and a half bovates of land. Bovate was another name for ox-gang, that is, as much as one ox could plough, and was commonly reckoned at fifteen acres. Was this a thank-offering for his new possessions? Most probably so. And as it was held by the Knights in 1185, it shows, as stated above, that William de Colvile was in possession on or before that date.

It is interesting to know that these sixty-seven and a half acres were held by three tenants named Roger, William, and Hugh, and that the rent they paid

amounted to *fifteen shillings, four hens, and four days' work in autumn!*⁹ We thus learn that seven hundred years ago land was let in Bytham for about *three-pence per acre!* ^{9 "Mon. Angl." vol. ii. p. 538.}

Afterwards this land became the property of the Preceptory of Temple Bruer in this county, and at the suppression was sold to a John Broxholme. "25th March, 35 Hen. VIII., John Broxholme made request to purchase . . . Farms in Castle Bytham (Lincoln), parcel of the late Preceptory of Temple Br'wer (Lincoln), late of the Priory of St. John of Jerusalem." (*Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records.*)¹⁰ From another record it appears that this piece of land was then called *Ersling*. ^{10 Appendix ii. p. 179.}

In A.D. 1204, Baron Colville warranted to the Prior of Drax the Church of Swinstead, which had been given to them by his father. Seventy-eight years afterwards one of his descendants attempted to claim the patronage of this church. It was brought to trial, and the monks maintained their right. From the Harleian MSS.¹¹ we learn that some arms, supposed to be those of the Colvile's, formerly existed in a north window of Swinstead Church, described as

3 crosses botone fitchey.

These, however, were not the arms of the Bytham Colviles, which were

Or a fesse gules.

A.D. 1206 King John was embroiled in foreign wars, and Baron Colville, wishing to stay at home, paid to the King 20 marks as the cost of his passage, that he might not be compelled to serve abroad.¹² In the same year he also gave 20 marks and a palfrey to obtain possession of his property in Normanton. ^{12 Rot. de Fin. 289, 350.}

Six years later his right to some property in Swinstead was challenged by Maurice Gant.¹³ William de Colville claimed to hold it of Maurice. Maurice asserted that it was part of his own demesne lands. ^{13 Abbrev. Plac. 83.}

The matter was brought to trial, and a Grand Assize was held to decide it. Finally, judgment was given for William de Colville.

For some years now the political horizon of the country had been clouding over. Indications of an approaching storm multiplied. But so complicated were the movements of parties at this period, that it will be necessary to pause for a moment in our narrative to explain them.

The Pope was the great central figure. Next to him stood the King. Between these two masters the barons were constantly coming to grief. That John was a bad king, licentious and reckless, need not be repeated. Nor is it strange that so many bad qualities procured him enemies. He became involved in quarrels with the Church. For this, in A.D. 1208, the Pope placed the kingdom under interdict, that is, forbade the performance of Divine service, and, in the next year, excommunicated the King and all barons who took part with him. Thus, during this part of John's reign, those who were faithful to him were excommunicated. In 1212 his Holiness of Rome proceeded a step further, deposed King John, and gave the realm of England to Philip, King of France. Philip proceeded to raise a large army to take possession; and John, perceiving that matters were now growing desperate, hit on a happy expedient to extricate himself. He resigned his crown to the Pope, and obtained his protection. That which the Pope had given to Philip, John now gave to the Pope. Mark the effect. The French King was requested to disband his forces, and all who *opposed* King John were, in their turn, excommunicated.

Among those now anathematised was William de Colville. As the breach widened between King and barons, he uniformly sided with the latter, and, as far as can be seen, preserved amid these exciting and wretched conflicts a straightforward and consistent course.

In A.D. 1215 began the Barons' War, which grew out of the nobility insisting that the laws of Edward the Confessor, and the liberties and privileges which had been granted to their subjects by former kings, should be confirmed, and the King as obstinately refusing. At length, on the 15th of June, John was compelled to sign the *Magna Charta*, and twenty-five of the Great Barons were appointed to see that he faithfully kept his part of the treaty. All precautions were useless. The King repudiated his engagements, commenced a war upon his subjects, and, to prosecute his cruel and unnatural project, gathered mercenaries from all parts of the Continent.

On the 19th of December he had completed his plans, and set out on that memorable expedition to the North, so marked by spoil and rapine. Of the horrors of this march Matthew Paris draws a fearful picture.¹⁴ "John, changed from a king to a tyrant,"¹⁴ P. 190. or rather, while retaining the semblance of a man, breaking out into the savage cruelty of a wild beast, set out from St. Albans towards the North. With him were William Earl of Albemarle, Philip de Albineto, and John Mareschall; and of foreigners, Gerard de Sotini, Godeschall with the Flemings and Slingers, and the scum of other nations, who neither feared God nor regarded man. Before daylight he was on his way towards Northampton. As he passed along he levelled the cottages of the poor, and, like a general in a hostile country, sent detachments of his army hither and thither to burn the castles and mansions of the rich, and to carry off all the cattle and plunder they could lay hands upon. . . . Everybody, regardless of age, rank, or condition, who was found outside a church or cemetery, was seized, and compelled, by various tortures, to pay an exorbitant price for his ransom. But it was chiefly against the harmless poor that his wrath vented itself. The retainers in the barons' castles were better able to take care of themselves. When made aware of the King's ap-

proach they abandoned the fortresses, and, thinking only of their personal safety, betook themselves to hiding-places, carrying off with them their victuals and household goods. *The King, meanwhile, filled the empty castles with his own men*, and hastened onwards to Nottingham with his nefarious satellites."

While the inhuman wretch is keeping his Christmas—his last Christmas on earth—at Nottingham, let us jot down the line of his march.¹⁵ On the 19th of December he set out from St. Albans; on the 20th he was at Dunstable; on the 21st at Newport Pagnell; on the 22nd at Northampton; on the 23rd at Rockingham; on the 24th at Melton Mowbray; and on the 25th at Nottingham, keeping the solemnity of the Nativity.

The morning of the 26th saw the camp again in motion. The King proceeded as far as Langer, whence he sent his messengers to Belvoir to demand the surrender of that castle. This delayed him till the morning of the 28th, when, having received the keys of the castle and the submission of its inmates, he proceeded to Newark; and thence by Lexington towards the North. Of the horrible cruelties practised during this march the following picture must suffice. "The satellites of Satan, the servants of the devil, who had assembled here from all parts, overspread the earth like swarms of locusts.¹⁶ To be suspected of possessing anything was a sufficient cause of death for the poor inhabitants. Those who had nothing were compelled to say they had, and then were tortured to deliver it up. Assassins, red with human slaughter, midnight prowlers and incendiaries ran here and there with drawn swords, to sweep from the face of the earth man and beast, and everything useful. With knives in their hands they searched villages, houses, cemeteries, and churches, desolating all alike. Neither women, infants, nor infirm old age were spared. Anything which they could not consume they threw on the fire, or scattered on the ground, to

¹⁵ Hardy's
"Itinerary."

¹⁶ Matt. Paris,
p. 191.

render it useless." On priests and soldiers alike they exercised the most cruel tortures. "Some they suspended by their feet and legs, some by their hands or thumbs, and forced into their eyes salt mixed with vinegar . . . Others they forced into crates and tripods, and first placing them over glowing embers, then plunging them into water covered with ice, compelled them to pass at once, as it were, from something like infernal torments to extreme cold, or to die under the process . . . The torturers demanded nothing but money, which the poor sufferers did not possess . . . This persecution was general in England. Fathers were sold to torture by their children, brothers by brothers, citizens by citizens. Fairs and markets ceased. Goods were bought and sold in the cemeteries, and not even there without great disturbance; and agriculture came to a standstill."

Returning from the North, John arrived at Lincoln on the 23rd of February, 1216, where he remained till the 27th. Passing through Sleaford on the 27th, *he directed his course to Stamford*, there spent the night of the 28th, and thence proceeded to Fotheringhay.¹⁷

The necessity for enumerating these particulars appears in the following passage: "When (by the means above enumerated) the country was thoroughly subdued, the King parcelled it out among his favourites. The land between the Tees and Scotland, with its castles, &c., he delivered to Hugo de Bailliol and Philip de Hulcotes. Over the county of York he appointed Robert de Vetripont, Brian de Insula, and Galfrid de Luci. *To William, Earl of Albemarle*, he gave the Castle of Rockingham, that of Sanneia (Mount Sorrel), *and the Castle of William de Colvile, which is called Bytham.*"

Thus we learn that in this memorable expedition the Castle of Bytham was taken by John from William de Colvile, and placed in the hands of

¹⁷ Hardy's
"Itinerary."

William de Fortibus. Whether it was taken as the King and his minions proceeded northwards by Rockingham and Melton Mowbray, or on their return towards Stamford, is not, so far as I have seen, positively stated. Nor is it worth while to hazard a guess. It would be possible either way, though much nearer the line of march on the return.

This journey from Sleaford to Stamford gives an air of probability to traditions of King John having been at Creeton and Witham-on-the-Hill. At the latter place is a house still known as King John's House. If these traditions may be received, and I can see no reason why they may not, they certainly suggest the question whether he did not also come to Bytham. Some time during this journey he took Bytham Castle. But whether he actually came in person to receive its surrender, or waited, perhaps at Creeton or Witham-on-the-Hill, till tidings came that it was in the hands of his messengers, must be left uncertain.

Where was William de Colville all this time? Doubtless with the other barons at London. While John was harrying the country, they lay inactive, troubling themselves only about what they should eat and drink, or spending their breath in useless lamentations. Finding some course of action imperative, they at length invited Louis, the son of the French King, to come over and take possession of their divided country. He accepted the invitation, and landed on the 20th of June.

While Louis and his adherents were subduing the south of the wretched, war-stricken land, John breathed his last at Newark, on the 18th of October, 1216, leaving a son Henry, not then ten years of age, and who became Henry III.

The succession of the young prince was, of course, advocated by all his father's friends; and many of those who had opposed his father, becoming suspicious of the ulterior designs of the French prince, joined

his standard. It is sufficient to state here that the two persons with whom we are chiefly concerned remained true to their respective parties. The Earl of Albemarle sided with Henry III., and Baron Colville with Louis.

The battle of Lincoln, fought on the 4th of June, 1217, was a crushing defeat for the opponents of Henry. Fortunately the barons on the King's side pursued their flying foes with a friendly discrimination. The English who fought for Louis were not so hotly pursued or so hardly pressed as the foreigners. Had they been, scarcely a man could have escaped. William de Colville was present at this engagement, fighting on the French side, and was among those who were taken prisoners.

Where Lady Colville was at this time does not appear. News of her husband's captivity, however, quickly reached her, and she immediately took energetic steps to procure his release. Her name was Maud: but beyond that we have no information of her or of her family. Having procured letters of safe conduct to the King,¹⁸ she repaired to the Royal presence, and there interceded for her husband's release, and by entreaty and payment effected her purpose. The good lady was not gifted with political foresight. She had no means of divining how matters between Henry and the French prince would end, and so took the shortest and surest method of procuring her lord's freedom. Had she, however, exercised a little faith and patience, Providence would have favoured her wish at a cheaper rate; for, before the year was out, Louis and the King came to terms. By one article in the agreement, the former was to quit the kingdom, and never return with the purpose of doing harm, and by another, all prisoners on both sides were to be released without ransom.

¹⁸ Pat. 1 Hen.
III. m. 6.

The brave Maud bargained for the restoration of her husband's lands and castle as well as his person; and shortly after a Royal precept was issued, ordering

¹⁹ Pat. 2. Hen.
III. m. 10.

the Earl of Albemarle to restore to William de Colville his Castle at Bytham.¹⁹ But those were days when great barons were prone to consult their own feelings and interests, Royal mandates notwithstanding. The Earl had been loyal to King John during the latter part of his reign. He had also been loyal to the youthful Henry, and helped to seat him on the throne. Why, then, should he be called upon to surrender the fortress at Bytham to a man whom he looked upon as a traitor? The reason was far from obvious, to his mind at least; so he resolved to keep Bytham, and take the consequences.

CHAPTER IV.

WILLIAM DE FORTIBUS, the second Earl of Albemarle of that name, succeeded to his title and estates in the early part of 1215.

In Easter week of that year a number of barons assembled at Stamford against King John. The Earl of Albemarle is especially mentioned as one who did not join in this rebellion. Perhaps his mother's recent death kept him in retirement; or he might not have made up his mind as to the side he would take. Neither grief nor indecision, however, could long keep him inactive in such trying and perilous times. In the next year he placed himself on the side of the barons against the King; and was one of the celebrated *twenty-five* chosen to enforce the observance of Magna Charta.

Before the year was out he changed sides, and, as already mentioned, was with King John in his lamentable expedition to the North. For this service he was rewarded with the Castles of Bytham, Rockingham, and Mount Sorrel.

Immediately after the accession of Henry III., he was ordered to restore to William de Colville the Castle of Bytham, and refused to do so.

His erratic and headstrong disposition soon began to show itself. About the year 1218, William Longspec, Earl of Salisbury, wrote to Hubert de Burgh, the Justiciary, declaring that all contracts and agreements between the Earl of Albemarle and himself were at an end, and that if the former committed any act which he ought not to do, he wished the justiciary to be apprised that he was in no way answerable for it.¹

¹ Royal Letters, No. 225.

About the middle of May, 1219, the Earl of Pembroke, who had well and wisely filled the office of Regent since the accession of the new King, was removed by death. In his place, Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester, was appointed. Under this new Regent, Henry made a progress into several counties, his chief object being to make alterations in the custody of the castles. For not only was there great injustice in the way in which they had been distributed by John, but many of them were held by persons in whom the Regent had little confidence. In this progress the King met with no opposition, except from the Earl of Albemarle, who, with his three strongholds, "set up for a petty sovereign, or rather a tyrant, and took little or no notice of the orders sent from Court."²

² "Rapin," vol. iii. p.

He must also have been guilty of excesses involving serious breaches of ecclesiastical law, for which sentence of excommunication was publicly pronounced against him by the papal legate and seven bishops.*

Mount Sorrel was his principal residence just now; and we learn from one of the Royal letters of this period, dated Nov. 30, 1219,³ that he was busily engaged in victualling and fortifying it. The letter in question was issued to all the earls, barons, knights, and free tenants, in Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Cumberland, Rutland, Leicestershire, and Yorkshire. It states that the Earl of Albemarle was detaining certain lands and castles contrary to the King's command, and notwithstanding that a certain day had been fixed for their surrender. It further charges him with forcibly carrying off the corn and goods of those living in the vicinity of his castles to provision and fortify them. For these things, and because he and his aiders and abettors had been excommunicated by

³ "Chron. and Mem. of Great Britain," &c., vol. i. p. 56.

* This took place in a Council held at London after the octave of the Epiphany. ("Chron. of John Abbot of Peterborough," p. 99.)

the papal legate, the earls, barons, &c., are strictly charged, as they value their lands and tenements, in no way to give their countenance, aid, or advice to the said Earl or his accomplices, nor to hold any intercourse with them, until they return to their obedience to Holy Church, and make satisfaction to the King. And, finally, they were to forbid all their dependents, and those subject to them, to give him any help or assistance towards fortifying the Castle of Mount Sorrel.

The year following, on the vigil of St. Peter and St. Paul, the King suddenly appeared before the castles of Rockingham and Mount Sorrel, to demand their surrender. The Earl made a show of resistance; but when he saw the whole country in arms to assist the King and free themselves from his oppression, he preferred the advantages of capitulation to a hopeless struggle, ending perhaps in the loss of all he had. There was also another cogent reason for this speedy submission. When the castles were given up, it was found that the whole stock of provisions then remaining in them consisted of *three loaves of bread*.

The loss of these places was a bitter mortification to William de Fortibus. He believed himself unjustly deprived of them, and secretly resolved that Bytham should not be parted with so cheaply. The same feelings of irritation and revenge were working in other minds; for many of those among whom the King's father had divided the land had been compelled to give up something. The malcontents found opportunities of bemoaning together their common grievance. And as *might* was, among them, pretty nearly the only acknowledged *right*, their mutual condolences savoured strongly of calculations as to what they could keep or recover. There were then "many in England to whom, during the past time of war, it was most sweet to live by plunder. Whence, after peace was declared and granted, they

⁴ Matt. Paris, Sub. Ann. 1218. could not keep their itching hands from pillage."⁴ First among these was our Earl of Albemarle.

At length Christmas, 1220, came. The King kept his Court at Oxford, attended by the earls and barons of the kingdom. When the Royal festivities were happily and peaceably ended, everyone, according to the good old custom of the realm, freely bestowed his gifts. William de Fortibus cast a cloud over this Christmas sunshine. Suddenly and without permission he left the Court and hastened to Bytham. Had he received some intimation that he must prepare to give up this Castle also? If not, had cold looks excited his fears, or had his fellow-malcontents fanned the smouldering embers of sedition into a flame? The latter appears the more probable surmise, as he relied on Falcasius de Breant, Philip Marc, and Peter de Mala Leone, and some others, to aid him in his desperate enterprise.

His first few days at Bytham were spent in collecting a number of armed men, and giving instructions for the further strengthening of the Castle. He then set off to Tenham, devastated the village, and having seized the corn there belonging to the monks of Burlington, brought it to Bytham to victual the Castle. Next he directed his steps to the town of Deeping, laid it waste, took the men captive, and then by horrible cruelties forced them to pay heavy ransoms. Other places in the neighbourhood were similarly treated. And to such a degree did the alarm spread that the people carried their goods into the churchyards, and themselves took refuge in the churches for safety.

Meanwhile Parliament assembled at Westminster. Our Earl, who had been summoned with the other barons to attend it, set out as if to obey. His restless spirit, however, found a greater attraction by the way. Fotheringhay Castle was not far out of his line of march, and news reached him that it was but poorly guarded. The temptation was over-

powering. To Fotheringhay he went. Its few defenders fled, or were swiftly subdued. And when he had garrisoned the place with his own men, he hurried back to his stronghold at Bytham.

With his position thus strengthened, he grew more daring and headstrong than ever. He harried the whole district, and still further fortified his favourite Castle with the spoils. And to crown his former acts, he issued orders that no merchant or tradesman should follow his vocation in, or travel through, the district about Stamford without *his* pass.⁵ Of course the pass had to be paid for. By this means he doubtless intended to assert his authority in the locality, and to provide to some extent the means of sustaining it. Thus our old Castle became the focus of a serious rebellion, and a terror to the whole neighbourhood.

⁵ "Chronicon
S. Petri de
Burgo," p. 99.

Events had marched onwards at a rapid pace. William de Fortibus did not launch out on his career of open rebellion till after Christmas, 1220. January, 1221, was not yet ended, and he had proceeded from Oxford to Bytham; from Bytham to Tenham and back; then ravaged Deeping and some other neighbouring villages; captured Fotheringhay; and added considerably to the fortifications of Bytham.

CHAPTER V.

¹ "Chron. and
Mem. of Great
Britain," &c.,
vol. i. p. 168.

News of his excesses quickly reached the ears of the King and his Council, and prompt measures were taken to repress them. Henry, with such forces as he had in readiness, at once set off for Bytham, and orders were sent throughout the kingdom for others to meet him there. Thus to Geoffry de Nevile, "Henry,¹ by the grace of God, &c., to his beloved and faithful Geoffry de Nevile. Seeing that William, Earl of Albemarle, and all his aiders, abettors, and followers have been excommunicated by the Lord Legate, the Archbishop of York, and the English Episcopacy, on account of their manifold and open excesses committed against the Holy Church and against us; and that he has stealthily and seditiously seized the Castle of Fotheringhay, which was in our hands, and maliciously retains it; and by spoiling and laying waste the land has broken our peace and the peace of our realm, we command and strictly enjoin you, by the allegiance you owe to us, &c., that immediately on receipt of these letters you set out to join us at Northampton, with all the force you have at hand, well equipped with horses and arms, and that you be ready to go with us in person, and with our other faithful subjects against the said Earl . . . And those of your followers who are not in a state of readiness now, you shall order to follow with all expedition, &c." Dated January 23rd, 1221.

A large army was quickly assembled; and to defray the expense a *scutage* * of ten shillings for

* Scutage, or Escuage, was a tax at so much per shield (*scutum*), or, what is the same thing, so much per knight's fee, on all who held lands of the King for military service.

every knight's fee was levied on the whole kingdom.

The King commenced his march from London on the 28th of January. The next day he was at St. Alban's; thence he proceeded to Newport Pagnell; on the 2nd of February he was at Northampton; on the 5th at Stamford, and on the 6th at Bytham.

It will be better, however, to trace the order of events connected with this journey more minutely.

Commencing with the 28th of January, we find His Majesty at Westminster; and on that day he signed an order to his Chamberlains² to pay to William, the son of Umfrid, and to Hugo de Blye, who were setting out for Bytham, the sum of £80, to clear off arrears due to the soldiers and men under their command. He then commenced his own journey. And though marching at the head of his army as its general, he travelled in royal state. His *throne*, and other insignia of royalty, were brought with him. Among other charges for this journey is one item for *two sumpter horses* to convey the King's throne from London to Bytham; and another for *one sumpter horse* to convey it back again.

² Close Rolls,
5 Henry III.

The next day, January 29, His Majesty passed through St. Alban's, and reached Newport Pagnell.

By the 2nd of February he had got as far as Northampton. From this town he sent to the Mayor of Lynn, ordering him to send at once, in flat-bottomed boats to Deeping, 2,000 fathoms of rope, to be used in dragging petrarias and mangonells.* Two honest men were to accompany the boats to bear witness to the cost of the rope, and to receive payment. Robert Blund carried this mandate, and received sixpence for his services.

Philip Marc was at that time Warden of Nottingham Castle. To him, on the same date, letters were sent,

* Petraria, a warlike engine used for hurling large stones against the walls of castles; Mangonell, a kind of catapult.

ordering him instantly to set out and hasten to meet the King at Bytham, bringing with him as large a force as he could, saving a sufficient garrison for the Castle of Nottingham. He was also to bring with him, under the safe conduct of his people, both soldiers and free tenants, two good petrarias, two mangonells, pikes, cords, slings, quarrels,* balistas, both of wood and horn, and all the targets he could get together. And further, he was also to bring carpenters, slingers, mechanics, and miners, if he had any, or could procure them. These forces from Nottingham were to join others marching from Belvoir Castle under William de Albiní, and to place themselves under his command.

On the 5th of February the King was at Stamford. From this town orders were despatched to the Sheriff of York to come to the King at Bytham, and to bring with him all the money he had belonging to the royal treasury, that it might be used in the siege of the Castle.

The next day, February 6, King Henry III. was at Bytham! This is probably the only occasion on which Royalty has ever visited Bytham. And it is worth remarking that the whole of the journey appears to have been lost sight of by nearly every historian. How, or why, I cannot tell: such is the fact. A casual remark in Dugdale sent me to the Close Roll above quoted, and there I found most of the particulars here enumerated. But whether the youthful sovereign came along the north road from Stamford as far as Stretton, and then turned eastwards to Bytham, or whether he chose some other route, we have no means of determining. Hither, however, he came. He saw the old Castle in all its pristine glory, gazed on its moat and walls, on its battlements and towers, as they rose against the leafless woods in the background, and frowned defiance even on Royalty

* Quarrels were large arrows for cross-bows.

itself. From this point and that, he and his generals viewed the lordly pile, and plotted its overthrow. And while so engaged there gathered round him his great barons and their armed legions to work his will. Among these we can enumerate Henry, Earl of Warwick; William de Cantilupe; William de Mowbray; the Lord Hastings; and Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester, and Regent of the kingdom.

It is a matter of regret that we have no sketch of the Castle as it then stood.

William de Fortibus did not stay to defend his stronghold in person; but, having manned, strengthened, and provisioned it, took his departure for Yorkshire. Either he intended to raise other forces among his numerous dependants in that county to bring to the relief of Bytham, or he could not overcome the repugnance which a feudal baron always felt to fighting in person against his Sovereign. Cowardice it could not be. He first directed his steps towards Nottingham,³ passed through that town on the Sunday night preceding the feast of the Purification of the B. M., and before morning had reached Welham, a small village a mile-and-a-half east by north of Retford. Here he rested awhile. On Monday he came to Steinton, to the house of William de Bueles, between Tickhill and Conisborough, where he met with his Countess and stayed till night; and then, having armed himself, proceeded to Skipton-in-Craven.

³ "Chron. and Mem. of Great Britain," &c., vol. i. p. 171.

In all probability the garrison at Bytham was left under the command of Vasallus Foilliis. And, as this responsible person was captured outside the Castle walls, it is not unlikely that the place was languidly defended, and so proved an easier conquest than it otherwise would have done. I infer that this Vasallus was a chief man among the rebels, if not actually next to the Earl himself, for his capture by Ivo de Calcot is specially mentioned, and Ivo was rewarded with

100 shillings for his exploit. The importance of this capture further appears by his being sent at once to the Castle of Salveia (Mount Sorrel), and thence taken by the constable of that place to Falcasius de Breant. By Falcasius he was next conducted to St. Alban's, and there handed over to the Sheriff of Hertford, who in his turn conveyed him to the Tower of London.

The first document signed by the King at Bytham, relative to his operations there, was an order to the Mayor of Lincoln to receive from the Sheriff of York the sum of 40 marks, which ought previously to have been paid into the royal treasury. This amount the Mayor was to bring with him to Bytham. The order is dated February 6.

If siege operations had not already commenced, they would do so on that date. The soldiers, disposed in wedge-like battalions, after the fashion of those days, completely surrounded the Castle. Petrarizæ and mangonells for battering the walls, and hurling stones and other missiles on the defenders, were set up. Assaults would be made by the besieging party, and the besieged, watching their opportunity, would sally forth to drive back the more advanced parties and destroy their engines of war. I wish our accounts would enable us to trace the operations from day to day. But as no chronicle of the siege has come down to us, we can only collect and arrange the scattered notices which exist. Of these the one given by M. Paris is the fullest; but in his eager haste to cut it short he falls into an undoubted error. His account runs that the walls and buildings were thrown down in a very short time, "so that those who were inside could find no place where they could lay their heads in safety, and having no other refuge, they all came out of the ruins of the Castle and presented themselves to the King on the 8th of February." This makes the siege last but two days.

⁴ Vol. iv. p. 66. In a note to Roger de Wendover,⁴ we are told

that the Castle "held out for five days, and was then taken and burned to the ground." Even here again we must doubt the correctness of the date; for among the Close Rolls of this year I find one to the Sheriff of London, signed by the King *at Bytham, on the 12th of February*, ordering him to purchase twelve cart-loads of cord or rope, and to send them to Bytham with all possible speed, day and night. The siege, therefore, could not have terminated before the 12th of February. And it is almost equally certain that it lasted some days longer, for we have ample proof that His Majesty did not leave the village before the 18th or 19th of the month. My impression is that the Castle held out till the 17th, or thereabouts, that the walls were then breached, and the soldiers, remembering the tactics of their Norman forefathers, set fire to the buildings as the shortest way of reducing their inmates, and the fire having communicated itself to the keep, the besieged had the only alternative of surrender or being burnt to death. They chose the former, were placed in chains, and sent off to London.

The total number of prisoners taken is no where stated. The Peterborough Chronicle describes them as "very many" (*quamplurimi*).⁵ The following scraps inform us further about them:—

⁵ Sub. Ann.,
1221, 8.

Three shillings for eight couples of rings for the prisoners who came from Bytham.

The King to Engel de Cygnus, health. We command you to receive the six prisoners who were taken in the Castle of Bytham, whom Stephen de Segrave will send to you with letters containing their names, and that you provide for their safe custody till we command you further. Dated February 28.

Five shillings and ten pence to seven men with carts employed in bringing our prisoners from Bytham, for the balance of one day. March 15.

Twelve pounds paid to Robert de Aubervill and Paul de Tayden for conducting the prisoners taken in the Castle of Bytham to London. March 15.

The King to the Sheriff of London, health. We command you without delay to convey by water thirteen prisoners who were taken at Bytham . . . from the Tower of London to Dover. Dated May 9.

On the 21st June Geoffrey Wind, who was one of the prisoners, obtained the King's pardon and the restoration of his lands in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. He is specially mentioned as one of those who harried the surrounding neighbourhood before the siege.

The overthrow of the Castle and its lawless inmates seemed complete when the prisoners were in chains, and the fire had left it a blackened crumbling shell; but this was not enough to satisfy royal vengeance. Orders were issued to the miners, John de Standon and the men under his command, to throw down the edifice; and they were paid twenty-three shillings and eight pence for their work. Doubtless these extreme measures were thought necessary. We, however, look on the ruin their hands wrought with far different feelings from the men of their generation. For these old castles, grand as they were, were built in a pitiless age. They afforded a strong place of refuge and protection to the dependants of their powerful owners, but they were a standing threat and terror to all beyond. To the oppressed Anglo-Saxon population they were especially odious. Speaking of Stephen's reign, the Chronicle says: "They filled the land full of castles.⁶ They cruelly oppressed the wretched men of the land with castle-works, and when the castles were made they filled them with devils and evil men. Then they took those whom they supposed to have any goods, both by night and by day, labouring men and women, and threw them into prison for their gold and silver, and inflicted on them unutterable tortures; for never were any martyrs so tortured as they were. Some they hanged up by the feet, and smoked them with foul smoke; and some by the thumbs, or by the head, and hung coats of mail on their feet. They tied knotted strings about their heads, and twisted them till the pain went to the brain. They put them into dungeons, wherein were adders, &c., and so destroyed them. Some they placed in a crucet-house; that is, in a chest that was short and narrow, and not deep,

⁶ Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Sub Anno., 1137.



THE CASTLE HILL
(N.W. VIEW)



wherein they put sharp stones, and so thrust the man therein, that they broke all the limbs. In many of the castles were things loathsome and grim, called '*sachenteges*,' of which two or three men had enough to bear one. It was thus made: that is, fastened to a beam; and they placed a sharp iron (collar) about the man's throat and neck, so that he could in no direction either sit, or lie, or sleep, but bear all that iron. Many thousands they wore out with hunger." Matters were not much improved in John's reign. When, therefore, we are disposed to mourn over the ruins of a Norman keep, let us remember that such places were not always the homes of harmless pageantry. Their history has its dark pages as well as bright ones.

But we must follow the King back to London, and as we do so we shall gather a few more interesting scraps.

On the 19th of February Henry was at Stamford. By some means he learnt that the Bytham rebels had a quantity of salt fish stored in St. Leonard's Priory, just outside that town. This His Majesty ordered the bailiffs of Stamford to seize, and place in safe custody, till he gave them further orders about it.

From Stamford also, and on the same date, the King issued his writs to all who held of him *in capite*, levying a scutage of ten shillings for every knight's fee to defray the expense of this expedition.

And while here he showed his appreciation of the services of one Brito, a slinger. He was pleased to order him a present of £20; but out of this sum Brito was to repair one of his warlike engines, called a horse, which had been damaged. Perhaps this was the man who first breached the Castle walls, and this his reward. Ivo de Calcot was rewarded for capturing Vasallus Foilliis. Why not Brito for his special services?

From Stamford the King proceeded to Huntingdon,

viâ Peterborough, on the 20th of February; the next day he was at Crucem Roestem; on the 23rd at Ware; and on the 26th at the Tower.

The following accounts will give some idea of the various items of expense connected with this expedition:—

£	s.	d.	
			<i>To Philip Marc</i> , Sheriff of Nottingham, the cost of bringing one Petraria and two Mangonells from Nottingham to Bytham, and of taking the same back to Nottingham. Amount not stated; but to be certified by competent witnesses.
20	0	0	<i>To Brito</i> , the slinger, as a present, and for the repair of one horse—an engine of war.
			<i>To the Sheriff of London—</i>
	4		marks for 17 targes, or large shields, sent to Bytham.
0	9	6	for carts to carry two Mangonells from London to Bytham.
0	3	6	to the men who brought them as far as Northampton, for their expenses.
	3½		marks for one cart load of ropes sent to Bytham
0	36	0	for two horses with their harness for the use of two master-carpenters, who went to Bytham with the aforesaid Mangonells.
	¼		a mark for the expenses of these carpenters on their way to the King at Bytham.
0	4	3	for one saddle chest and bridle to carry the King's money to Bytham.
0	8	0	for two double satchels in which to place the money.
0	36	2	for the carriage of 12 cart loads of rope to Bytham, and back again to London.
0	9	5	for getting Mangonells out of the crypt of St. Paul's, London, for carriage of the same Mangonells, and for carriage of the large shields and ropes aforesaid.
0	3	0	for 8 double rings for the prisoners who came from Bytham.

Expenses paid for the King by Alexander de Sabrictes-wurth. Sum total as stated in the heading, £496 13s. 8½d. Nearly all the particulars relate to the siege of Bytham Castle.

27	0	0	to Brito, the slinger, and his 53 men going to the siege of Bytham Castle. Paid at Northampton on the 2nd of February.
100	0	0	to Peter de Orival, for the King's expenses on his journey to Bytham, to the before-named siege. Paid at Stamford on the Thursday next following. (<i>i.e.</i> , Feb. 5.)
	4		marks to William Croc, Geoffry de Cressy, Guido de Haya, and Hugh de St. Berners, Knights of the Company of Philip de Ulcot. Paid at Bytham on the Saturday following. (<i>i.e.</i> , Feb. 7.)

£	s.	d.	
4	14	2	for 12 carts ten days bringing machines from London to Bytham for the before-mentioned siege.
25	0	0	to Henry de Braybroc, and to Brito, the slinger, for making crates, and to carpenters, masons, quarrymen, and carters, for making levels, and to men for dragging Petrarias. Paid at Bytham on the Sunday following. (Feb. 8.)
0	100	0	to Ivo de Calcot for the capture of Vasallus Foilliis.
0	14	14	to the dealers of Stamford, for empty casks for the use of the miners.
0	0	12	for carrying the ropes, which came from Lynn, from Deeping to Bytham.
			2 marks to Master William, the Earl of Salisbury's mechanic, for setting up machines.
0	20	0	to John Bonecourt, Sheriff of Lincoln, for collecting rods to make crates.
24	0	0	to Brito and his men in part payment of their account.
0	9	5	to Albricus, for mending fetters for the prisoners.
0	12	2	to William, son of David, of Stamford, for ropes bought at Stamford.
12	0	0	to Robert de Auberville and Paul de Tayden, for conveying the prisoners taken in the Castle of Bytham to London.
0	23	8	to John de Standon and his miners, <i>for throwing down the Castle of Bytham.</i>
100	0	0	to Peter de Orivall for the King's expenses; paid on Thursday next after the feast of St. Valentine. (Feb. 19.)
0	100	0	to P., Bishop of Winchester, returning from Castle Bytham. Paid on the last-mentioned day. (This was Peter des Roches, then Regent of the kingdom.)
8	0	0	to William Crock and his men, who were of the company of Philip de Ulcot. Paid at Peterborough on the said Thursday.
0	100	0	to William de Marant. The King's gift.
0	5	10	for 7 carts which brought the prisoners from Bytham. The balance of one day.
40	0	0	to Brito, the slinger, and his men, in part payment of their balance.
0	40	0	to Ralph Pagan and Nicholas Walens, for the repairs of two horses.
0	6	4	for two sumpter horses to <i>convey the King's throne from London to Bytham.</i>
0	3	1½	for one sumpter horse to <i>convey the King's throne from Bytham to London.</i>
0	18	0	to Alexander de Sabricteswurth, being the balance due to him for 27 days, at 8 pence per day, for going from London to Bytham, staying there, and returning from Bytham to London.
			1 mark, to Robert de Hotot, the carpenter, and his men, for arrears during the time of their journey from London to Bytham.

£	s.	d.	
o	40	o	To Falcasius de Breant— paid by him to the keepers of the King's machines of war, for conveying them to Bytham, to the siege of the Castle there.
o	5	6	paid by him for two white hides, bought at Northampton, to make slings for Petrariæ and Mangonells.
o	13	10	paid by him for 40 long pikes, bought at the same place, and sent to Bytham.

2 marks to the Mayor and Wardens of Lincoln, for ropes sent to Bytham to drag the Petrarias and Mangonells.

When William de Fortibus heard of the destruction of his Castle, and the capture of his adherents, he began to think of his own safety. His first step was to gain the Archbishop of York. Next, through the Archbishop, he secured the powerful interest of the papal legate; and under their protection he came and made his submission to the King. Doubtless, his past services and faithful adherence to the King's father were dwelt upon, and many and profuse promises made for the future. So successful were these entreaties, that a full and free pardon was granted to the Earl and to all his accomplices.

Certainly this was a mild termination, to say the least, to a rebellion carried on so persistently and attended by such numerous outrages. M. Paris takes care to note that the King thereby set a very bad precedent, and that others who might be disposed to follow the evil example could now do so with confidence.

This rebellion brought to an end the connection between the Earls of Albemarle and Castle Bytham.

William de Colville was at length reinstated in his own again, no longer as subinfeudatory to the Earl of Albemarle, but henceforth as tenant *in capite*.

We need not pursue the career of William de Fortibus further than to remark that, as a composition for his treason, he founded the Dominican Friary of SS. Mary and Nicholas at Stamford,⁷ and that he died in the Mediterranean Sea on his way to the Holy Land, on Good Friday, 1241, and was buried at Thornton Abbey in this county.

⁷ "Walcot's Memorials of Stamford," p. 18.

His arms, as represented on a facsimile of Magna Charta, are *Ar, 3 bends gules, a chief or.*

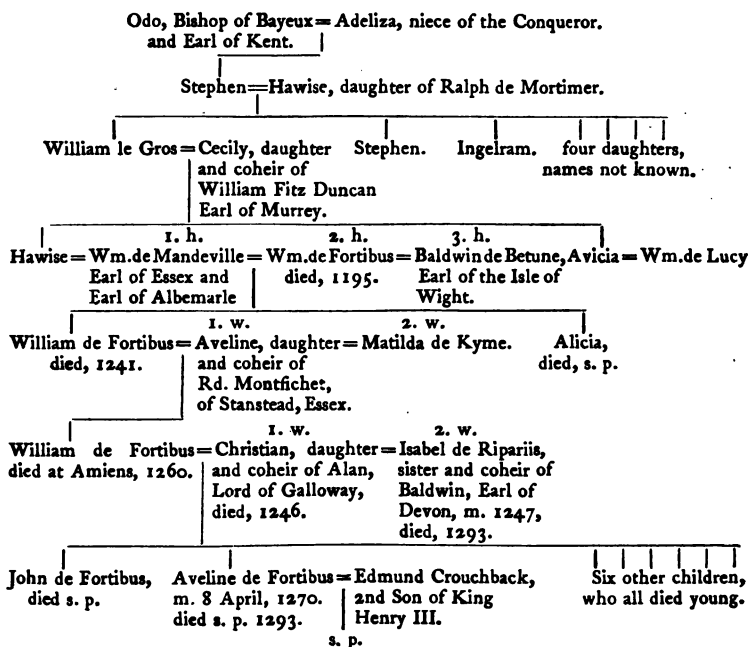
Aveline de Fortibus, grand-daughter of this William, was the last representative of this powerful family, and succeeded to the earldoms of Albemarle and Devon, the barony of Skipton, and the sovereignty of the Isle of Wight. It will be remembered that Holywell with Aunby formed part of her vast possessions.

On the 10th of July, 1269, she espoused Edmund ^{53 H. III.} Plantagenet, second son of Henry III., the King, Queen, and almost all the nobility of England being present at the wedding.

She died November 10th, 1293, without issue, and her honours passed into other families.

Arms, *Ar a chief gules.*

PEDIGREE OF THE EARLS OF ALBEMARLE.



CHAPTER VI

WILLIAM DE COLVILE, of whom we have lost sight during the last three or four years, now appears again to take possession of his Manor at Bytham, and its demolished Castle. We can almost imagine the old man—for old he must have been by this time—giving vent to his feelings in a passionate burst of grief as he saw the scene of desolation around him. Every object would bear traces of the fury of war. The cottages of the poor, the stately Castle, and the church—sanctuary of rich and poor alike—had doubtless suffered. But it was vain to waste time in useless regrets. He would be glad to regain his own once more, though his joy, like all earthly joy, had its alloy of sadness.

His first work was to restore and rebuild. For this we have the authority of Camden,¹ who says: “Afterwards,” that is, after it had been laid almost level with the ground, “it became the seat, and as it were the head, of the Barony of the Colviles, who lived for a long time in very great honour.” Of the rebuilding I have met with no particulars. But, impoverished as its owner then was, it must have been a slow and burdensome work.

Five years afterwards, A.D. 1226, we meet with a curious document, and one which intimates the existence of a bitter domestic grief for Baron Colvile—“A son that caused him shame.” It is a mandate from the King to the Sheriff of Lincoln forbidding any one to purchase venison from the wood of William de Colvile. The following is a translation:—

“The Sheriff of Lincoln is commanded to cause a proclamation to be made in the village of Bytham,

¹ “*Britannia*,”
vol. i. p. 560.

and throughout all the neighbourhood of Bytham, that no one be so bold as to buy venison out of the wood of William de Colville, which, as the Lord King has heard, he has exposed for sale *out of hatred to Roger, his son and heir*, and which he declares he will sell on account of the debts which he (the said William) owes to the King and the Jews."²

² Close Rolls,
10 Hen. III.

We shall hear more of this Roger presently.

In 14 Henry III. (c. 1230), the King committed to the custody of Robert Coffin and William de Dive all the lands with their appurtenances which belonged to William de Colville. His chequered life had come to an end. Let us hope that end was peace, that amid all the changes and trials he had passed through, he steadfastly clung to the hope of a better and happier life hereafter, and so lived as to obtain it. His abhorrence of his son's iniquities, and his steady opposition to the villainies of King John, give us grounds for believing that he did.

Roger de Colville's name has come before us once or twice. As he was son and heir to William, the first baron, it will be as well to mention here what is known of him. As early as 1203 he had land in Bytham. For in that year he came before the justices,³ and claimed as his right two bovates of land there, which were held by Humphrey, the son of Richard, and Idonea his wife. These good folk attended, entered an acknowledgment that they and their heirs held of him and his heirs, and that the rent or consideration they paid was one pound of pepper and four pence annually.

³ Abbrev. Plac.
⁴ John. Rot. 5.

Our next mention of him is far less creditable; but as the story is told in connection with another of a similar kind, it will be better not to part them. And by way of preface, let me remark that, whatever other virtues powerful barons of that day denied the monks, they seldom refused to credit them with carefulness in money matters. Piety or learning might, or might not, exist in the cloistered retreat,

but a convenient sum of ready cash they believed always did. And to know where a supply for a crowd of pressing wants may be found, and still to let the wants crowd and press, has always been a sore trial for a certain class of mankind. Fortunately those great and headstrong men had a dread of excommunication. To be denied the ministrations of the Church in sickness, and refused burial in consecrated ground when dead, was a prospect sufficiently alarming to keep most of them within reasonable bounds. Still there were some who attained to Gallio's standard—neither feared God, nor regarded man. Falcasius de Breant was one. Falling short of the sinews of war, he assembled a number of men from his castles of Oxford, Northampton, and Bedford, and marched to the town of St. Alban's.⁴ This was on the 22nd of January, 1217. Arriving in the evening he first attacked the town and wasted it, and seizing men and infants loaded them with chains. Thence, proceeding to the door of the abbey church, he slew one of the servants of the monastery, who was flying to the sanctuary for safety. Next a message was despatched to the abbot demanding a hundred pounds of silver, and threatening to burn the monastery over his head, and the whole town with it, if the money were not forthcoming at once. Of course the abbot refused. The threats of Falcasius and his men grew louder, and their attitude more menacing. At length the terrified monks, seeing no other means of saving their abbey, produced the sum required, and "Falcasius with his accursed robbers, and his spoils that were sure to bring mischief upon him," marched back to Bedford.

Setting out again from Bedford, he and his men came to the Forest of Walberg. What his object was this time we are not told, but while there he met with our Roger de Colville, who like himself had fallen short of money, and was trying in a more humble, but not more honest, way than attacking

⁴ Matt. Paris,
p. 202.

towns and monasteries, to obtain the desired supply. He had gathered round him a band of sixty desperate fellows, clerics and laics, of that locality, and was lying in wait—Robin Hood fashion—to rob passers-by. A skirmish ensued, and Roger, having the weaker party at his back, got the worst of it, and was taken prisoner. When or how he was liberated I know not. But the two incidents, coming side by side as they do, show in strong colours the utter lawlessness of the times.

In 1227 Roger de Colvile was again in disgrace. By some means he obtained pardon for a fine of a mark, which had been inflicted upon him before the justices in Eyre, at Lincoln.⁵ This is the last we hear of him. He disappears, but in a manner which indicates that his earthly career was ended. And as this took place a short time before his father's death, his brother Robert became heir,⁶ and succeeded to the title and estates.

⁶ Cal. Gen. 635.

Of *Robert de Colvile*, second Baron of Bytham, we know but little. Following his father's example, he adhered to the opponents of King John; and in A.D. 1215, he, with Roger de Jarpevill, had letters of safe conduct to the King, on behalf of the barons, to treat of peace.⁷

⁷ Pat. 17 John, m. 4.

In 1227 (12 Hen. III.) he was ordered to give up the lands which belonged to Brian de Mara to the Abbot of Peterborough, to whom the custody of them belonged.⁸

⁸ 27 Rept. 82.

In 1233, he did homage for his lands in Castle Bytham; and in 1247 obtained from the King a charter for an annual fair and a weekly market to be held at Castle Bytham.

To this Robert succeeded his son *Walter de Colvile*, who was a person of the same turbulent spirit as his forefathers. Joining with Montfort, Earl of Leicester, he was taken prisoner by Prince Edward at Kenilworth, in the year 1264 (49 Hen. III.), but under the decree called the "Dictum of Kenilworth," he

was admitted to a composition for his lands, which had been seized.

He appears to have been summoned to Parliament on the 14th of December in the same year.

⁹ Testa de
Nevile, p. 307.

He held two knights' fees in Bytham and elsewhere, in the time of Henry III. and Edward I.⁹

¹⁰ Rot. Pat. 49
Hen. III. m. 1.

Here we meet with a document which requires further elucidation. It bears date the same year as that in which Walter de Colville was taken prisoner at Kenilworth. "The King has granted to Isabella, who was the wife of Walter de Colville, the manors of Woburne, Coynthorp, Swaffield, and South Wythine."¹⁰ Her husband certainly was not dead. Had they been assigned for her maintenance during his imprisonment, it would hardly be expressed "Isabella quæ fuit uxor," &c. The most probable solution is, that for some reason or other, she had separated from her husband, and obtained a divorce.

¹¹ Esc. 5 Ed. I.
n. 41.

His lordship died in 1276 (5 Ed. I.), seised of the Manors of Bytham, Auburne, and Ledenham, in Lincolnshire; Muston, in Leicestershire; Weston, in Cambridgeshire; and the village of Thistleton, in Rutland.¹¹

Roger de Colville, son and heir of the last baron, was 24 years of age at the time of his father's death.

¹² Peck. Hist. of
Stamford, lib.
ix sect. 4.

At Easter, 1279 (7 Ed. I.), he released the nuns of St. Michael, Stamford, of all service due from a tenant of theirs in his fee of the town of Wenton, and likewise in the field of Berk, saving only to himself a yearly rent of ten shillings, and the King's right in the same tenement to the King.¹²

THE MARKET AND FAIR.

¹³ Plac. de Quo
Warranto. Linc.
9 Ed. I.

The Charter for these was originally obtained, as we have seen, in the year 1247. In 1281, the Baron of whom we are now speaking, procured a confirmation of that charter.¹³ This document, which supplies us with several particulars, runs as follows:—

“ Roger de Colville came hither before the justices, and claimed the right to hold a market and a fair, and those things which belong to them, on his Manor of Bytham; viz.: a market weekly, on the Tuesday; and a fair every year for eight days;—that is to say, on the Vigil and Feast Day of St. James the Apostle, and the six days following. For this he alleged and produced a charter of King Henry, father of our present Lord King, and which charter bears date 22nd July in the 32nd year of his reign.

“ He claimed also Free Warren,* Furcas,† and Infangenthes,‡ and view of Frank Pledge§ in the same Manor, of ancient right.

“ He further stated that he received benefit of the before-named *furcas* in the said Manor, and not elsewhere.

“ He also claimed *Weyf*|| view of Frank Pledge, and emendation of assize of bread and beer, from his tenants at Auburne and Ledenham, of ancient right.

“ Moreover, he stated that he gives yearly aid to the Sheriff, and pays two marks for view of Frank Pledge for his lands at Bytham only. And for his lands at Auburne, he gives nothing to the King, because they are under the fine of Lord Robert de Ros. Also for his lands at Ledenham he gives nothing, because they are of the honour of Richmond. * * * * *

“ The jurors of Beltislaw affirm upon oath that the

* *Free Warren*. The privilege, granted by royal charter, of hunting and taking any kind of beast, bird, or fish upon a particular manor.

† *Furcas*. The right of erecting or setting up the *furca* within the bounds of a certain fee. This was a kind of cross or gibbet, in the form of the letter Y to which slaves, &c., or those condemned to servile punishment, having their arms tied, carried it through the streets, being scourged all the while, and sometimes gibbeted at the end of their journey.

‡ *Infangthes*. The right of apprehending robbers, &c., on an estate.

§ *Frank Pledge*. Right to call the freemen in decennaries or bodies of ten, to be sureties for the good behaviour of each.

* *Weyf*, or *Weif*. Stray cattle, or other things which have been lost, and are not sought or claimed by any one.

said Roger is fully seised of all the liberties which he claimed in his Manor of Bytham, and that the customs are not otherwise than they ought to be, &c. They also affirm that the said manor, with all its appurtenances, is taxable for murder and ordinary fines, that the Lord King is seised of it, and that he has not enlarged his warren."

Dugdale asserts that in 14 Edward I. (A.D. 1285), this Baron paid a fine of £100 for marrying Ermentrude, the widow of Stephen de Cressey. There is every probability, however, that he has mistaken one of the Suffolk Colviles for the Bytham one. The reasons for so supposing are—In 51 Henry III. (1266), a Roger de Colvile was Sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk; and the wife of the Roger with whom we are concerned was certainly named Margaret, not Ermentrude, as certainly survived her husband, and is supposed to have been the daughter of Lord de Brewer. Accordingly, in 9 Edward III. (1335), Margaret, wife of Roger de Colvile, held the Manor of Ayketon, and Burgh (super Sabulones), in Cumberland, and probably died that year. For the King's mandate then issued to William de Clapham, escheator, in the county of York, "to take into the King's hands all the lands and tenements of which Margaret, formerly the wife of Roger de Colvile, died possessed."¹⁴

¹⁴ Abbrev. Rot. Orig. ii. 95.

In the same year the King received the homage of Robert de Colvile, Knight,¹⁵ a relative of the above-named Margaret, for the manor of Ayketon, with its appurtenances, in Cumberland, together with certain tenements in Burgh (super Sabulones) belonging to the same, which Margaret held of the King *in capite*, for homage and the service of paying to the King annually into his treasury at Carlyle, on the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Mary, twenty-seven shillings for horn-blowing.*

¹⁵ Abbrev. Rot. Orig. ii. 96.

* *Horn-blowing* was an ancient tenure in the North of England, by which some lands were held on condition of blowing a horn, upon an invasion made by the Scots.

This Lord Roger had three children, Edmund, Elizabeth, and Alice.

Edmund succeeded his father in the title and estates.

Elizabeth married Ralph Basset, of Sapcote in Leicestershire, and had a son Simon, whose son and heir, Ralph Basset, of Sapcote, became eventually co-heir to the Colviles.

Alice married . . . Gernun, and had a son, John Gernun, who became also co-heir to the Colviles.

His Lordship died in 1287 (16 Ed. I.), possessed of the manors of Ayketon, in Cumberland; Normanton, in Derbyshire (?); Auburne, Ledenham, Bytham, and West Bytham, in Lincolnshire; also lands in East Bytham, Careby, and Couthorpe; fees in Lyndon, Creeton, Swinstead, East Bytham, Conesby, and Somersby; and the patronage of Creeton Church.¹⁶

¹⁶ Esc. 16 Ed. I.

His widow married for her second husband John Gobard, or Goband, and was probably buried at Rippingale; for, in front of the south wall of St. Ann's Chapel, is a canopied tomb, surmounted by a female effigy. According to Holles it formerly bore the epitaph—

“Sire Richard de Gobard me fist fere,
En le honor de sa mere.”

The monument is of the fourteenth century, and commemorates Margaret, first the wife of Roger de Colvile, and secondly of John Gobard.

By this second marriage some of the Bytham property passed to the Gobards; and thus, in 1320 (14 Ed. II.), John, the son of John Gobard, paid a fine of thirty marks to the King, and acquired possession of certain tenements in West Bytham.¹⁷

¹⁷ Abbrev. Rot. Orig. i. 258.

Edmund de Colvile, third baron by writ, was only three months old at the time of his father's death, and was committed by the King to the wardship of William de Breuse.

“The King, for a fine of £100,¹⁸ which William de Breuse made with the King, has granted to him the custody of the lands and tenements which belonged

¹⁸ Ubi supra, 16 Ed. I. Ro. 9.

to Roger de Colville, deceased, and which he held of the King *in capite*, as of the honour of Albemarle, in Bytham, West Bytham, and Careby, in the county of Lincoln; to be held by him until the lawful age of the heir of the before-named Roger; saving to the King the right of disposal in marriage, &c., and subject to an account being rendered by the same William of the sum of £83 16s. 3½d. annually during the said custody."

William de Breuse and his wife both died before Edmund came of age. Their son William appears to have succeeded to the guardianship, and to have been held responsible for the remainder of the sum

¹⁹ Ubi Supra, 9 of £1,497 3s. 4½d. due to the King.¹⁹
Ed. II. Ro. 3.

When eighteen years old his lordship was declared of age, and married, in this or the previous year, Margaret, daughter of Robert de Ufford.

In 1315 he obtained a charter of confirmation for his market and fair at Bytham.²⁰

²⁰ Inquis ad
quod Dam., 243

He died in the same year, aged about twenty-eight, leaving a son and heir named Robert.

His possessions were—

In Cambridgeshire, the Manors of Weston and Dokesworth.

In Rutland, two parts of the Manor of Bergh, and six bovates of land in Thistleton.

In Leicestershire, the Manor of Muston, and six bovates of land in Normanton.

In Lincolnshire, the Manors of Auburne, Ledenham, Braylound, and Bytham; lands in both Bythams, Careby, Ounby, Swayfield, Swinstead, and Somerby (the lands in the Bythams, Careby, and Ounby are returned at £39 5s.); and Fees, in Humby one, Saperton one, Swinstead one, Ounby three parts of one.²¹

²¹ Esc. 9 Ed. II.

Robert de Colville, son and heir of the last named, was ten years of age at his father's death. As a minor, he and his possessions in Lincolnshire were committed to the custody of Robert de Kendale.²²

²² Abbrev. Rot.
Orig. 10 Ed. II.
Ro. i.

On the accession of the third Edward he was about twenty-one years old. In 1334 his name appears as plaintiff in an action against Robert de Bilkemor.²³ Whether Baron Colville had offended

²³ De Banco
Rolls, 8 Ed. III.

him, and he chose this summary way of revenging himself, or whether it was a piece of wanton mischief, does not appear. But Robert de Bilkemor made an onslaught "with arms and violence," as the lawyers say, on certain houses and trees at Bergh, in Rutland, belonging to Lord Colville. He knocked down the houses, felled the trees, and destroyed or carried off £40 worth of property, besides committing other enormities.

In 18 Edward III. Robert de Colville paid to the King a fine of 40 marks for licence to be granted to Humphrey de Bassingbourn, Knight, that he might feoff Master William Bray, parson of the Church of Abyndon, and John Walger, chaplain of Bytham, of his Manor of Abyndon, to be held by them and their heirs for ever.²⁴

²⁴ Abbrev. Rot.,
Orig. ii. 170.

In the same year his lordship was a good deal engaged in the wars of France.

Two years afterwards he obtained a charter of confirmation for the market at his Manor of Castle Bytham, every week upon the Tuesday; and a fair yearly for *five* days, viz., on the Eve and Feast Day of St. James the Apostle, and the three following days.²⁵ Had the fair ceased to be as attractive and thriving as formerly, or had the people settled down to more business-like habits? Instead of eight days it was now held during only five. Another document dated this same year suggests a not improbable cause. It is a charter of confirmation for a fair and market at Corby. We need only remember that our fair began on the 25th of July, and it is easy to see a sufficient reason why it gradually succumbed to another held only a few miles off, and at a more convenient time—it interfered too much with the harvest. People would attend that which was most convenient. Corby undoubtedly possessed this advantage as far as harvest operations were concerned. And therefore Corby retains its fair, while not even a tradition of its rival at Bytham remains.

²⁵ Cart. and Pat.
20 Ed. III. m. 2.

It may as well be mentioned here that in the early part of the present century some remains of the old Market Cross were standing. They were close to the angle formed by the junction of the north side of St. Martin's with the main street, and were finally removed about A.D. 1830. The house standing close by was then a public-house, and the stone over the front door was the sign of the Wheat Sheaf.

In the year 1351 (25 Ed. III.), for half a mark paid to the King, Baron Colville obtained permission to make a grant of land out of his Manor of Bytham to Richard de Dornthorp, vicar of the Church of Bytham, John Walger, chaplain of Bytham, and Richard del Wode, constable; the said land to be held by them and their heirs for ever.²⁶ No doubt I think can be entertained that this grant of land was for the endowment of the Chantry Chapel, which formerly existed in the north transept of the Church, and was dedicated to St. John the Baptist. It could scarcely be the foundation of the Chantry, as John Walger was chaplain of Bytham in the 18th year of Edward III.

²⁶ Abbrev. Rot.
Orig. ii. 219.

In the next year Lord Robert was constituted one of the commissioners of array in the county of Lincoln for the purpose of arming all knights, esquires, and others, to resist the power of the French, who were threatening an invasion.

In 1359 he was commissioner of array for the preservation of the peace in Kesteven.

He was summoned to Parliament amongst the barons of the realm from 16 Edward III. until the 39th of that reign; *i.e.*, from February 25, 1342, to January 20, 1366.

His lordship died in 1368, being then possessed of the Manor and Castle of Bytham, the Manors of Corby, Careby, Burton Coggles, Repinghale, Billesfield, Auburne, and South Witham, together with the fees of Crome and Cheiley.²⁷

²⁷ Esc. II. 268,
Inquis. Post.
Mort. 42 Ed.
III. m. 13.

Walter de Colville, fifth Baron by Writ, was never summoned to Parliament. He married Margaret,

daughter and heiress of Giles de Bassingburne,²³ and ^{28 Rot. Fin. 43}
 had issue one son, Robert, who died without issue. ^{Ed. III. m. 10.}

The male line thus came to an end, and the estates
 were divided between the Bassets and Gernons.

Arms, *Or, a fesse gules.*

PEDIGREE OF THE COLVILES, BASSETS, AND GREYS.

Philip de Colville =

William de Colville = Agatha de Albin.

William de Colville = Maude
 1st Lord of Bytham

Roger de Colville died s. p. Robert de Colville =

Walter de Colville = Isabella

Roger de Colville = Margaret

Edmund = Margaret,
 daughter of
 Robert de Ufford.

Elizabeth = Ralph Basset.

Alice = John Gernun.

Simon Basset = Isabel.

John Gernun.

Robert de Colville =

Ralph Basset = Sybil, daughter
 of Sir
 Giles Astley.

1. w.
 2. w.
 Alice,
 daughter of
 John Driby.

Walter de Colville = Margaret de
 Bassingburne.

Alice = Sir R. Moton.

Robert de Colville.

Richard, Lord = Elizabeth.
 Grey, of Codnor

Margerey = John, Earl
 of Hereford.

Beatrice = J. Bagot.

John,
 d. s. p.

Henry = Margaret,
 Lord daughter of
 Grey. Henry Percy,
 Earl of Athol

William, Bishop
 of Ely.

Elizabeth = John Zouch.

Eleanor.

Lucy.

John Zouch.

1. w.
 Henry = Margaret
 Grey.

2. w.
 Catharine, daughter
 of John, Viscount
 Beaumont.

3. w.
 Catharine, relict
 of Sir William
 Berkeley.

Elizabeth = John Well.

Richard.

Henry.

CHAPTER VII.

IN 1369, a precept was issued to Richard de Wydvyl, the King's escheator in the county of Northampton, to make legal division of the Colvile property in that county, between Ralph Basset and John Gernon.¹ A similar command would doubtless be sent to the escheator of Lincolnshire. By this division the Castle and Manor of Bytham fell to Ralph, Lord Basset of Sapcote, who was the grandson of Elizabeth, the sister of Edmund de Colvile. John Gernon was the son of Alice, the second sister of the same Edmund.

The founder of the Sapcote branch of the Basset family was *William Basset*, one of the Itinerant Justices for Yorkshire in 1175 (21 Hen. II.), and younger brother to Ralph Basset, Lord of Drayton, in Staffordshire. He settled at Sapcote, in Leicestershire.²

To him succeeded *Simon*, and to him *Ralph*, who married, first, Milicent, one of the daughters and heirs of Robert de Chaucombe, and secondly, *Elizabeth, sister of Edmund de Colvile*, by whom he left a son, Simon.

This Ralph held the Shrievalty of Lincolnshire from the 25th to the 29th of Henry III. inclusive. Four years afterwards he performed a pilgrimage to St. James in Galicia. In the 42nd of the same monarch (1258), he received command to attend the King at Chester to repel the incursions of the Welsh, and in the same year was made Governor of Northampton Castle. Ultimately siding with Simon de Montford, Earl of Leicester, he was slain in the Battle of Evesham on the 4th day of August, 1265. He was succeeded by his son,

¹ Abbrev. Rot.
Orig. 43. E.
III. Ro. 11.

² Dugdale's
"Baronage,"
vol. i. p. 382.

Simon Basset, second Baron. This nobleman, in 22 Edward I., had summons to attend the King wherever he should be, to advise concerning the important affairs of the realm. To him succeeded his son,

Ralph Basset, third Baron Basset of Sapcote, who was one of the gallant soldiers of the martial reign of Edward III., sharing in the glories of Cressy, and afterwards in the reverses at Douchy and Raby-mont. His lordship married first, Sybil, daughter of Sir Giles Astley, by whom he had a daughter, Alice, who, according to Burke,³ married Sir Robert Moton, Knight; but, according to Dugdale,⁴ Sir Lawrence Dutton, Knight; secondly, his lordship espoused Alice, daughter of John Dirby (or Driby), and had another daughter, Elizabeth, who married Richard, Lord Grey of Codnor. He died on the Sunday next preceding the Feast of St. Margaret (July 20), 1378, possessed of⁵

Oakham, 3 shillings rent	Rutland.
Castle Bytham, the	{ As of the honour of Albe- marle. }	...	}
Castle and Manor			
Little Bytham, Manor			
Counthorpe, Manor ..			
Corby, Manor	} Lincolnshire.
South Witham, Manor	...	...
Careby, half the Manor, as of the honour of Huntingdon	...	...
Cheyle Manor, in Holland	...	...
West Yrkele, one messuage and one carucate of land	} Northamptonshire.
Benifield Manor, Castle and advowson of Church	...	...
Sapcote Manor and advowson of Church	...	...
Sapcote Village, one messuage and half a virgate of land	} Leicestershire.
Stanton Manor and advowson of Church	...	...
Potter's Mershton, 3 virgates of land..	...	...
Bredon Manor, with its members, Somerdeby, Dalby, Little Holwell, and Abketelby, as of the honour of Tutbury...	...	...
Chedeale Manor, extent	Staffordshire.

³ Inquis. Post.
Mort. 2 R. II.,
No. 8.

⁴ "Extinct
Peerages."

⁵ "Baronage,"
vol. i. p. 382.

Arms, *Ar, two bars undée sa.*

The Barony fell into abeyance between his two daughters.

The Castle and Manor of Bytham were assigned in dowry to Alice his wife, who married for her second husband Robert Touchet, and after his death gave her hand to Anketel de Mallory, to whom she bore a son, William de Mallory.

In her right this Anketel de Mallory held Castle Bytham in 15 Richard II. (1391-2.)

Lady Alice died in 1412.

The following are extracts from her will:—
 “Her body to be buried in the Chapel of the Holy Trinity within the house of the order of Friars Preachers at Stamford, near her last husband.” She left to the same house “£40 sterling, that these friars might pray for the souls of the Lord Ralph Basset, the Lord Robert Tochet, herself and her late husband, for the souls of John Dryby and Ann his wife (her parents), and the souls of her ancestors.” She further bequeathed her “best animal in the name of a principal to the rector of the parochial Church of Castle Bytham. To her poor tenants £10 . . . To the fabric of the Campanill (bell tower) of the Church of Bytham, £10. To the Chantry of St. John the Baptist in the same Church, 100 shillings . . . The residue to be divided into two parts, one to William, my son, to have . . . celebrated in the Church of Bytham, and to support 7 poor men of the same vill, who shortly before had been supported by me; and the other part to my executors, viz., Walter Lord St. Germain, rector of the Church of Benyfield, Brian de la Mareham Ingham, John Petynhall, rector of the Church of Croft, Robert de Lisle, chaplain of the Chantry of Careby.”* The supervisors were Philip, Bishop of Lincoln, and William Lord de Roos. The will was proved by John Petynhall, on the 26th October, 1412, and is in the Registry of Philip Repingdon, Bishop of Lincoln.

* There was therefore a Chantry Chapel at Careby.

We have now to introduce some other notable personages.

From Humphrey Bohun, eighth Earl of Hereford, and Elizabeth his wife, a daughter of Edward I., descended a numerous issue. Of these, *John*, who succeeded his father in the Earldom, married, for his second wife, Margaret, daughter of Ralph Lord Basset. Dying without issue he was succeeded by his brother Humphrey, who died on the 15th of October, 1361. William, a younger brother of these, was created Earl of Northampton, and had a grant of the Castle, Manor, and town of Stamford, the Lordship of Grantham, the Castle and Manor of Fotheringhay, and the Castle and Manor of Oakham. He departed this life on the 16th of September, 1360, leaving a son Humphrey, then nineteen years of age. This Humphrey, inheriting the titles and vast possessions of his father and uncle, became Earl of Hereford, Essex, and Northampton.⁶

⁶ Dugdale's
"Baronage,"
vol. i. p. 133.

He married *Joan*, daughter of Richard, Earl of Arundel, and had by her two daughters—

Eleanor, who became the wife of Thomas Woodstock, the sixth son of Edward III., and

Mary, married to Henry, Earl of Derby, who was born at Bolingbroke Castle, in Lincolnshire, and subsequently became King of England, under the name of Henry IV.

Earl Humphrey died in the early part of 1372. His Countess survived till April, 1419, and remained a widow.

Thus much seemed necessary to show the connection which existed between the Bassets and the Countess of Hereford, and to show also that the latter had a considerable interest in this locality. It does not, however, afford us any clue to the Countess's reason for choosing Bytham Castle for one of her residences, nor enable us to state on what terms she occupied it. As a fact, however, after her husband's death, and during part of the time it belonged to Lady Basset, it was inhabited by her.

On the 4th of July, 1394, her younger daughter

Mary, Countess of Derby, expired at the age of twenty-four, leaving six little children, viz.:—

Henry, born in 1387, who ascended the throne as Henry V.

Thomas, born in 1388, who became Duke of Clarence.

John, born in 1389, who became Duke of Bedford.

Humphrey, born in 1390, who became Duke of Gloucester.

Blanche, born in 1392.

Philippa, born in 1393.

Henry was located at Leicester with a tutor. John was placed under the care of a relative—the Lady Margaret Plantagenet, Duchess of Norfolk, and grand-daughter to Edward I., who lived at Framlingham Castle, in Norfolk. The four younger ones were taken in charge by their grandmother, the Countess of Hereford, who in 1394 brought them to Bytham Castle, where she occupied herself in their superintendence and education.

The Countess, though a woman of stern and haughty temper, was renowned for her love of the arts and her devotion to religion, and on the whole proved to her young charges a kind and judicious guardian.

Thomas and Humphrey were probably very soon removed from Bytham. But though the children were thus scattered, they paid each other visits, and we may reasonably suppose that during their grandmother's residence in the Castle they would frequently assemble within its walls, worship together in our church, and the elder ones at least ramble in our village and fields.

In the year 1395, Blanche and Philippa began to have their separate attendants and their regular establishments. As it may interest some young people to know how these high-born children were dressed and attended, I will venture on a slight digression to gratify their curiosity. There were at that time none of the light and elegant materials for dresses so common now. Heavy silks, cloths, and furs formed the staple material of the dresses of the rich; and with these young and old alike were clad.

Blanche and her sister had for ordinary wear gowns and mantles of scarlet cloth brodered with green, and for Christmas array, cloth of gold trimmed with costly silks of Tripoli, and capes furred with ermine.

Their attendants were numerous. Over their persons was placed a lady-mistress. A steward ruled over their servants and household arrangements, who was also their confidential man of business, tailor, furrier, and purveyor in general. Each of them had a nurse, whose duty by night was to sleep on a pallet-bed beside her young charge, and a waiting-maid in attendance. Philippa, who was hardly three years old, had another maid called "Agnes the Rocker," whose duties consisted in rocking her little lady to sleep. Besides these, a knight of the chamber, one gentleman esquire, two pages of the chamber, two of the wardrobe, and those engaged in the kitchen and other menial offices, were not thought too many to attend upon these noble children.

In September, 1396, the young ladies, Blanche and Philippa, were sent by their grandmother to live with their knight of the chamber at Eton, where they remained a year. He received thirteen shillings and fourpence a week for their board and lodging. Afterwards they were removed to London, and lived in their father's house in Bishopsgate Street, that they might be near the Court, and companions for the young queen of Richard II.

Their subsequent history is a sad one. When about eleven years of age, Blanche was married to Louis, eldest son of the Emperor Rupert, Elector Palatine of the Rhine; and with her husband usually resided at the Castle of Heidelberg. Soon after her sixteenth birthday she became a mother, and on the 22nd of May, 1409, breathed her last.

In 1406 Philippa was espoused to Eric, King of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. The marriage was contracted before she was ten years old; but she remained at home about three years afterwards, and

therefore did not actually become queen and wife till nearly fourteen. Eric made her a wretched husband. In private he ill-used her, avoided her society, was a drunkard, a lover of low pleasures and coarse companions. In vain she tried to reclaim him. Finding this impossible, she locked up her sorrows in her own bosom, and bore them with patient resignation. At length, worn out with twenty-six years of grief and suffering, she sought a refuge in the convent of Wadstena in Sweden, and there died broken-hearted.*

THE LORDS GREY OF CODNOR.

From Richard, Lord Grey of Codnor, and Elizabeth, daughter of Alice Basset, descended John, Henry, William, Elizabeth, Eleanor, and Lucy.

His Lordship died on the 1st of August, 1418.

⁷ Inquis p. mort. His possessions were ⁷—
6 H. V. n. 5.

Stanton, mediety of Manor	...	...	} Leicestershire.
Sapcote, do. do.	...	...
Codnor, Castle and Manor	...	...	} Derbyshire.
Cheddel, a third part of Manor	...	...
Benyfield, mediety of Manor and Castle,	...	...	} Staffordshire.
together with advowson of Church	...	...
Castle Bytham, mediety of Castle and	...	...	} Northamptonshire.
Manor, &c. ...	...	...
East Bytham and Counthorpe, mediety	...	...	} Lincolnshire.
of Manor ...	...	...
Corby, mediety of Manor, as of the	...	...	} Lincolnshire.
Castle of Bourne ...	...	...
Careby, mediety of Manor	...	...	} Lincolnshire.
Wytham, mediety of Manor	...	...
Cheyley, Manor	...	...	} Lincolnshire.
Metheringham Manor	...	...

John next succeeded to the title and estates, being then 22 years of age. He died about four years afterwards without issue, and was succeeded by his brother Henry in 1430.

This Henry married Margaret, one of the daughters and co-heirs of Henry, Lord Percy of Athol, and

* The greater part of the above particulars relating to the Countess of Hereford and her grandchildren is collected from Miss Luard's "Royal Children," p. 155, *et seq.* See also Wardrobe account, June to Feb. 17, Rich. II., *et ibid.*, 20, 21 Rich. II.

subsequently shared in the inheritance of that Lord Percy's lands.

His Lordship departed this life on the 17th of July, 1444, leaving a son, Henry, nine years of age.

The Lady *Elizabeth* still survived, and in the next year "enfeoffed John Duke of Somerset, and others, in all the lands of her inheritance; to the intent, that out of the revenues thereof, they should discharge her debts, as also her funeral expenses, at Aylesford, in Kent, where she appointed to be buried by her lord and husband; and to find a priest to sing there, for the soul of her said husband, herself, and children, for seven years; and to pay to the friars preachers at Stamford, ten pounds sterling, to pray for the souls of herself, her husband, and children."⁸

At her death, which took place in 1451, she was in possession of⁹—

Tonneworth Manor	Southampton.
Upton Manor	
Barton-in-the-Beny's Manor ...	Nottinghamshire.
Codnor, one-third of half the Manor.	
Langwith Basset Manor	Derbyshire.
Sapcote, mediety of Manor and Advowson of Church	
Stanton, mediety of Manor and Advowson of Church	Leicestershire.
Newbottle, by Brackley	
Benyfield Manor, Advowson of Church, and half the Castle with its land	Northampton.
Thistleton, 1 messuage, 68 acres of land, 8 acres of meadow, and 20 acres of pasture... ..	
In Gosberkirk, Quadring, Weston, Spalding, Pinchbeck, Surfleet, Donnington, and Bicker, 10 messuages, 9 cottages, 10 tofts, 10 bovates, and 300 acres of land, 6 acres of meadow, 200 acres of pasture, 1 windmill, &c., and £4 rent	Rutland.
Cheille Hall	
South Witham Manor and other things	Lincolnshire.
Metheringham Manor	
Basset's Hall Manor	
Corby Manor	
Bytham, mediety of Castle and Manor	

⁸ Dugdale's "Baronage," vol. i. p. 711.

⁹ Inquis. Post. Mort. 29 Hen. VI vol. iv. p. 250

Returning to Henry, her grandson, the next Lord Grey, it will be sufficient to observe that, though thrice married, he died without lawful issue. By his will, dated 10th September, 1492, proved 28th October, 1496, he gave to his wife Catherine, among other things, "Bitham Park, Stoking, South Witham, and Sapcote."¹⁰

¹⁰ Glover's Coll. Harl. MSS. 245, folio 160.

The Greys appear never to have held more than a mediety of Castle Bytham, Little Bytham, Couthorp, and Careby, among their other possessions. This gives an appearance of strong probability to Burke's statement, that Alice Basset the younger married Sir Robert Moton, and carried into that family the estates of Sapcote and Castle Bytham.¹¹ Indeed, the marriage can hardly be doubted, since "William Moton, son of Robert Moton," is mentioned in the elder Alice Basset's will; but, strange to say, I have met with no other mention of the Motons in connection with Bytham. Still, as Lord Basset held the whole of Castle Bytham, Little Bytham, and Couthorp Manors, and half Careby, and one of his daughters carried a mediety of these to the Greys, it seems reasonable to suppose that the other daughter would carry the other mediety to the Motons.

¹¹ "Extinct Peerages."

The next owner of Bytham, &c., was Lord Hussey. As Sir John Hussey, Knight, this same person was Sheriff of Lincolnshire in 1493-4 (9 Hen. VII.) On the 3rd of November, 1529, he was created Lord Hussey of Sleaford, where he built a mansion, and usually resided. Taking part in some commotions in this county, occasioned by the assessment of a subsidy, he was attainted of high treason, and executed at Lincoln in June, 1537. His lands, to the value of £5,000 per annum, were confiscated, and among them were the Manors or Lordships of Castle Bytham, Little Bytham, other lands in Castle Bytham and Little Bytham, with Castle Bytham Park.¹²

¹² Pat. Roll 30. Hen. VIII. pt. 6.

On the 3rd of June the year following, the whole of these lands, &c., were granted by the King to John

Russell, Knight, comptroller of the King's household, and to Anne his wife. They were to hold them as of the Manor of Collyweston, Northamptonshire, with view of frank pledge and free warren.¹³ In this same year John Russell was created Baron, and in the 3rd of Edward VI. (1549) raised to the Earldom of Bedford; and in 1554 (1 and 2 Philip and Mary) as Earl of Bedford he still held the Manor and Castle of Bytham, Bytham Park, and Little Bytham.¹⁴

¹³ Ubi. sup.

¹⁴ Esc. sub. ann.

From the grandson and heir of Sir Robert Moton, Knight, and Alice Basset, who died about 1455, descended a son and heir, Reginald Moton, of Peckleton. This Reginald had two daughters, his coheirs, of whom Elizabeth the younger married Ralph de la Pole, Esq., of Radbourne, Derbyshire, High Sheriff in 1477. By this marriage, Burke tells us, the estates of Sapcote and Castle Bytham were carried into the De la Pole family. Banks, in his "*Baronia Anglia Concentrata*,"¹⁵ gives the same account. Accordingly, in the sixth year of Edward VI. (1552), we find that German Pole held a portion of the Manor of Castle Bytham Park, 14 messuages, 12 cottages, half a water mill, and a portion of the advowson of Careby; also of the Manor of Bytham, 200 acres of land, with 60 acres of meadow, called Leet Apron Holts.¹⁶

¹⁵ Vol. i. p. 116.

Again, in the same year, German Pole holds a portion of the Manors of Castle Bytham and Careby; also part of 14 messuages, 14 meadows or tofts, 12 cottages, 1 mill, and 14 pounds of wax in Castle Bytham, Little Bytham, Careby, Corby, Edenham, Creeton, and Aunby; also one-third part of the Manor of Little Bytham, 3 messuages in Corby and Gunthorpe. The property in Castle and Little Bytham he holds of the King, as of the honour of Albemarle. In Careby, he holds of Lord Clynton as of his Manor of Bourne. German Pole is his next heir.¹⁷

¹⁶ Esc. sub. ann.

Banks, in the passage above quoted, adds that the Castle Bytham estate was long held by the Poles, and finally sold by them about a century ago, that is, as I

suppose him to mean, about 1740 or 1750. We shall find, however, that they had parted with it at a much earlier date.

In 1545, Charles Duke of Suffolk held Careby and Little Bytham. Probably the possessions thus described were lands previously belonging to Vaudey and Peterborough Monasteries, which had just been dissolved, and were conferred on him by Henry VIII.¹⁸ They still, I believe, form part of the Grimsthorpe estate.

¹⁸ Cal. Pat.
36 Hen. VIII.
pt. 11.

In 1549, John Hackett purchased of William Glascock the Manor of Creeton and Couthorpe, which he continued to hold in 1559.¹⁹

¹⁹ Esc. 3 Ed. VI.
pt. 2.
²⁰ Cal. Pat.
7 Ed. VI. p. 2.

In 1553, Henry, Earl of Westmoreland, held in Careby certain lands and tenements.²⁰

In 1591, William Tydd and Thomas Wilson purchased the Manor of Couthorpe with its appurtenances and other property there; also one-fourth part of the Manor of Castle Bytham, with its appurtenances, and other property there, and one-fourth part of 12 tenements at Little Bytham.²¹

²¹ Ibid. 33 Eliz.
pt. 30.

In 1620, June 2nd, John Hatcher purchased the Manor of Careby and Little Bytham, together with lands in Castle Bytham and Witham.²²

²² Ibid.
18 James I.
pt. 15.

In 1622, June 14th, F. Laiton purchased land in Castle Bytham to the value of £300.²³

²³ Ibid.
20 James I.
pt. 16.

In 1623, May 31st, J. Robins purchased Castle Bytham Park, which German Pole forfeited for debt.²⁴

²⁴ Ibid.
21 James I.
pt. 12.

In 1674, January 18th, the lordship of Castle Bytham was conveyed to Julian, Dowager Viscountess of Campden, by Viscount Montague. She settled it upon her son, the Honourable Baptist Noel, and after descending through two further generations of the Noels, now Earls of Gainsborough, on the 8th of June, 1739, it was purchased of them by the trustees of the will of Sir Brownlow Sherard.

In 1754, May 28th, the Duke of Ancaster conveyed his share, which he had received under the will of Sir Brownlow Sherard, to Lord Brownlow Bertie.

In 1771, July, the estate was by decree in Chancery divided into THIRDS, of which one went to the Duke of Ancaster and Lord Brownlow Bertie; one to Sir Nicholas Bayly; and one to Brownlow Dayrell.

In 1779, January 25th and 26th, the trustees under the will of the Duke of Ancaster and the other parties concerned, agreed to draw lots for the purpose of separating the whole lordship into three distinct estates (it having theretofore been in undivided one-third parts). On drawing the lots, on the 13th of September, 1779, *Lot 2*, comprising the *Castle Bytham* property, became the absolute property of Lord Brownlow Bertie.

In 1785, Sir Gilbert Heathcote was in possession of the *Castle Bytham* estate, and settled it together with other property.*

In the 43rd year of the reign of George III. an Act was obtained for dividing, allotting, and inclosing the open common fields, meadows, pastures, wastes, and other commonable lands and grounds within the parish of *Castle Bytham*, containing altogether about 2,500 acres. The Commissioners were sworn in 1803, and the allotment was completed on the 18th September, 1807.

The Duke of Ancaster and Kesteven was Lord of the Manor, and received, in lieu of all manorial rights, 2 acres 13 perches of land in the bullock pasture; his Grace also received besides, in lieu of other rights and lands, 82a. 3r. 27p.

* The above particulars, from 1674 to 1785, are from an abstract of title-deeds belonging to R. Heathcote, Esq. Judging from statements made to me by some of the old parishioners, it appears that Sir Nicholas Bayly and Brownlow Dayrell sold their portions, and that the greater part of them was purchased by Sir Gilbert Heathcote, Bart. Mrs. Hopkinson is said to have bought 300 acres.

The remainder was divided into smaller allotments, or set aside for public roads, stone-pits, &c.

The principal names by which land in the parish was then known were **BULLOCK PASTURE**, lying between Morkere Wood and the South Witham Road; **STOCKEN FIELD**, beginning on the west of the village and occupying the space between the South Witham Road and the private carriage and drift road from Castle Bytham to Stocken Hall, and so onwards to Morkere Wood and Bullock Pasture; **COW PASTURE**, between the Stocken Hall Road and Clipsham Road, and extending behind Little Haw Wood to Clipsham Lordship; **HOLYWELL FIELD**, running from Clipsham lordship to the Little Bytham lordship on the south of the road between those villages; **BECK FIELD**, opposite Stocken Field and on the other side of the South Witham Road; **NORTH BECK FIELD**, between Cabbage Hill and Lawn Wood; **MILL FIELD**, south of Lawn Wood and extending to the Little Bytham Road.*

The principal proprietors of land and tenements in the parish of Castle Bytham at the present day are Robert Heathcote, Esq., among whose possessions is the site of the old Castle; the Dowager Lady Aveland, who, as sister and coheiress of the late Lord Willoughby D'Eresby, inherits the manorial rights; J. F. Richardson, Esq., the lay impropriator by purchase of the lands, &c., allotted to the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln; Lord Aveland; C. T. S. Birch Reynardson, Esq.; and Richard Coverley, Esq.

The parish contains 4,007 acres 19 perches of land. Its woods cover about 662 acres, of which the largest are the *Morkere* and *Little Haw* Woods, on the borders of Rutland.

The Park lay to the north-west of the parish, enclosing a large area round Park House. *A few traces of its boundaries still remain.*

* The mound observable in a grass field above the Fishpools, and which some suppose to have been an outwork of the Castle, was the site of the old mill.

CHAPTER VIII.

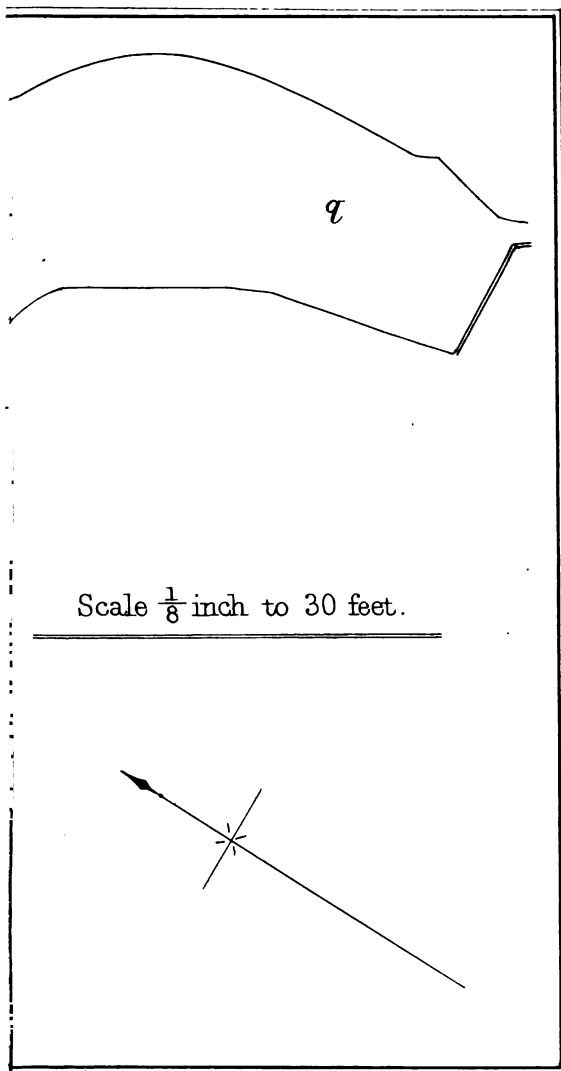
THE CASTLE HILL.

ORIGINALLY this appears to have been a spur, starting from the higher background, and similar to the one half-a-mile to the east, commonly known as "The Thunderbolt."

If the conjecture as to the name Bytham being a truncated form of the British name Bö-dhal-öm be correct, the first use to which the Hill was put, when the early Britons began to invade the domain of nature, was that of worship. It would be formed by them into something of a bell-shape. Entrenchments and other mounds would be made about it; and here the Druids would assemble the people to join in the bloody rites, which, in the more debased form of their religion, hardened the hearts of the spectators, and defiled the land.

During Anglo-Saxon times it has been conjectured that the Hall of the Thane, or chief inhabitant, was built upon it. It might be so. But the close proximity of the Danes at Careby, Carlby, and Aunby, would necessitate its being put to another use. Fortified after the fashion of the time, it would provide the inhabitants of the village with a secure place of refuge, whenever the Danes attacked them. For in those days of rude warfare, when a commanding eminence, defended by a palisade of timber, formed a strong fortress, this Hill would be the most impregnable place for miles round.* On any alarm, the

* There is a somewhat similar but smaller elevation at Corby, known as the Castle Hill. It is surrounded by a trench, and forms a single



Court Yard. d. South Court Yard.

Space between wall & keep.

l on East Side 240 + 43 ft. long.

ent. n. Towers. o. St. Martin's.

ft. in widest part. r. Premises,

ient Market Cross.

l.

by 1870.



villagers, with their wives and children, would flee to it, carrying such moveables as they could ; and, once within its enclosure, they might defy every attack. The assailing party would fight under overwhelming disadvantages. While climbing the steep sides of the Hill they would be shot down by arrows, pierced by darts, or tumbled headlong to the bottom by stones hurled upon them by those within the enclosure.

After the Conquest, it was selected by its first Norman lord as a fitting site for a castle. To prepare it for that purpose it is impossible to say what alterations would be made. But among other things its sloping sides would be cut away to be faced with stone walls, and its interior scooped out for passages and dungeons.

Towards the south (St. Martin's) the Hill-side has been worked as a stone-quarry, leaving a perpendicular face. A double object was thus gained. Stone was procured on the spot for use in the buildings, and the Castle rendered inaccessible on that side. In making this statement, however, I must add that the stone thus procured would be used for secondary purposes only. All the principal parts of the building, as far as can be judged from the remains, were of Clipsham stone.

Towards the east a deep trench was cut, forty feet wide, severing the Hill from the high background. Starting from the perpendicular southern face, just described, and sweeping round to the north in a semicircular form, this trench enclosed the whole eastern side of the Castle. The soil dug out was thrown up to form the high bank, in which the foundations of the wall and towers on that side were placed. Whether this trench was ever filled with water, and used as a moat, is uncertain. It is not easy to see where the water to fill it would come from,

bell-shaped mound. As there are no traces of masonry upon it, no lines of walls or towers about it, it cannot have been a Norman castle. Probably it is a Danish earthwork, or even British.

unless raised from below ; neither is it at all clear that it would hold water without a lining of clay or stone, of which no traces are apparent.

On the north and west lay a considerable sheet of water. This came partly from the Beck, which rises in Lobthorpe, and flows by Park House ; and partly from springs in the village and the western valley. The first encroachment on this gathering of waters was to bank it out of the space designated " Castle Yards." It would then form a sheet to the north and west of the present watercourse, as is proved by the formation of the soil there. Towards the south, as it approached St. Martin's, it would be confined to a moat proper. And here, a variety of circumstances lead us to conclude, stood the great Gate-house and Drawbridge.

Passing under the Drawbridge the water turned towards the east, and, flowing by the southern side of the fortress, ultimately spread itself out in the Fish-pools.

Having concluded the outer line of defences, let us indulge in a momentary digression to account for the name, St. Martin's. This is now a short street branching off from the main street in an easterly direction, and with a number of cottages on one side. Formerly it was the southern part of the moat. Possibly the great entrance to the Castle standing here was designated St. Martin's Gate ; and, after gate and Castle had disappeared, the name clung to the locality, and still survives. St. Martin was certainly a favourite with the Albemarles. The first Countess, Adeliza, dedicated to him the monastery she built at Albemarle, in Normandy ; and her son Stephen richly endowed it with English churches and lands. Moreover, St. Martin was the patron-saint of beggars. He earned this distinction when a soldier. One cold day he met a beggar at the gate of Amiens, shivering with cold under the few rags that scarcely covered him. Silver and gold Martin had none ; but such

as he had he gave. Taking out his sword he cut his ample military cloak in two, and wrapped the beggar in half of it. It is not at all unlikely, then, that the gate of this lordly mansion, where beggars were relieved and alms distributed, would bear his name. But it must also be stated that there is another and more probable cause for the name. It appears from an extract from the Institutions of Bishop Oliver Sutton, given in Chapter IX., that a chaplain was attached to the Castle. There was therefore a chapel within it. Scarcely a doubt can remain that this chapel was close to the gate, dedicated to St. Martin, and the origin of the peculiar name.

To return: the Castle was further defended by a series of strong walls and towers. Inside the eastern wall, which rose above the trench, was a large area, measuring about 500 feet by 200 feet in its widest parts. This was probably a court-yard, and contained a number of buildings. From the northern extremity of this starts a massive wall which completely encircles the Keep, and meets the eastern yard again near its middle. At the south-west of this wall stood a large bastion, and beyond this, extending towards the south, is another wall, which appears to have joined the Gate-house. Beyond was the perpendicular cliff. Returning again to the south-west bastion, a second wall starts from the one just named, and runs in a line parallel with the first wall, till it meets the eastern yard. Thus the Keep was protected by a double line of wall on the south. The Gate-house led into the space between this double wall and the southern cliff, and thence, by a passage through the wall, approached the Keep at its south-east angle. This space I have denominated the Southern Court-yard. It measures 320 feet by about 120 feet.

The Keep covered the lofty mound, which measures on its summit 174 feet by 172 feet, and rises above the present level between it and the wall from 40 to 50 feet.

Between the Keep and the eastern yard are the remains of a very strong tower, 54 feet in diameter. This is quite isolated by a wide and deep trench, except on the west, where it appears to have been connected with the Keep by a wall or narrow bank.

Returning to the space between the Castle wall and the Moat, on the north and west, is a field known as *The Castle Yards*. Allowing the name to tell its former use, we find that this was a third great yard. Its area is, at a rough estimate, about 160,000 square feet. On the east, this yard was shut in by a wall, which extended from the angle of the present water-course to the upper trench. The remains of this wall can be easily traced, but are less observable than many other parts of the fortifications. It is 283 feet long.

We thus see that the water, the upper trench, and the wall just described, formed the outer line of defences; and within these a formidable series of walls, towers, and bastions encircled the Keep.

The Castle built by Drogo, and inhabited successively by the Earls of Albemarle and William de Colville, was completely destroyed by King Henry III. in February, 1221. Rebuilt by William de Colville, it was the home of that family till about the year 1369.

Whether the Bassets ever used it as a residence is uncertain. But during part of the time it belonged to them it flashed forth into almost royal splendour, as the abode of the mother-in-law and four of the children of Henry of Bolingbroke.

From this date to 1542, when Leland tells us, "at Castell Bitham yet remain great walls of buildings," I find no mention of it. During that period, however, it had undergone the fate of things mundane. The hand of the destroyer had again been laid upon it; but this time there was none to rebuild. Its bare walls were tenantless, its battlements deserted, and it was left for a season to wage its own warfare with

time and tempest. Then men who ought to have preserved so venerable a ruin, rushed to the overthrow, and the remains were carted away to build other places.

Local tradition says that Lobthorp Hall was built of stone taken from the ruins of the Castle. Certainly many places in the village have been so built.

Hitherto I have been unable to meet with any account of the final overthrow; there can be no doubt, however, that it was destroyed during the Wars of the Roses. It was inhabited just before that terrible conflict began, and Leland's description of it is that of a place which had been long in ruins.

About sixty years ago, an opening was made in the Hill, and, on the south side, a few steps and a portion of an arched passage were discovered. These, the inhabitants who can remember them, tell me, bore traces of fire. The steps, seven in number, are said to have been removed, and the opening filled up by the then tenant. Subsequently a part of a wall was laid bare at the north-east corner, which was remarkably well built. In (or near) this wall a large stone coffin was found. It contained nothing but a little dust—no bones or other indications of human remains. As the easiest way of getting it down the Hill, some wiseacre proposed rolling it down. No more sensible person was present to defeat the counsel of this village Gothamite,* so down it was rolled, and of course broken to pieces.

In July, 1870, by the kind permission of R. Heathcote, Esq., and the occupier, and with the assistance of some friends, the writer made an opening near the south-east corner of the Keep. After a time solid masonry was struck upon, which proved to be part of a strongly-built passage. Next a flight of steps was laid bare. These—twenty in number—

* The wise men of Gotham rolled their cheeses down a hill, and expected to find them safe and sound at Nottingham Market, seven miles off.

rose in a curve from the passage just named to a higher passage (long since gone), running apparently due west, and at a right angle with the lower passage. The steps are four feet wide, and very much worn on the front edge. Wherever the ruins were uncovered, especially on the walls, the action of fire was distinctly visible. The surface of the stones for a quarter of an inch in depth was red and friable, underneath they resumed their natural colour. But one conclusion could be drawn from this appearance, and that is, that the second destruction of the Castle was effected by fire. Traces of the first burning could not have remained so fresh and distinctly evident after the rebuilding and an occupancy of 200 years.

On the 1st of September digging was resumed. During the day we met with a beam of wood burnt to charcoal. Next we struck on the top of a wall, which proved to be six feet thick, the front faced with good firm masonry, and the middle filled with rubble, run together with mortar. Digging down by the inner face of this wall we found a quantity of red and white ashes mingled with pulverised charcoal. Beneath these was firm masonry, which proved to be the top of an archway forming a continuation of the passage discovered in July. It was considerably below the level of the other part, showing that it still continued to descend.

The next day we cleared away sufficient of the *débris* to get into the passage, and found it about five yards long. It was blocked up at the far end with rubble. We then began to work at the outer face of the wall to come at the opening of the passage, and succeeded in finding the top of a broken arch in the wall.

On the 5th of September we resumed work. Part of the day was spent in clearing away soil, rubble, and loose stone, so as to lay bare the opening discovered on the 2nd. In doing this the remains of another wall was struck upon, about six feet in front of the former, and at a still lower level.

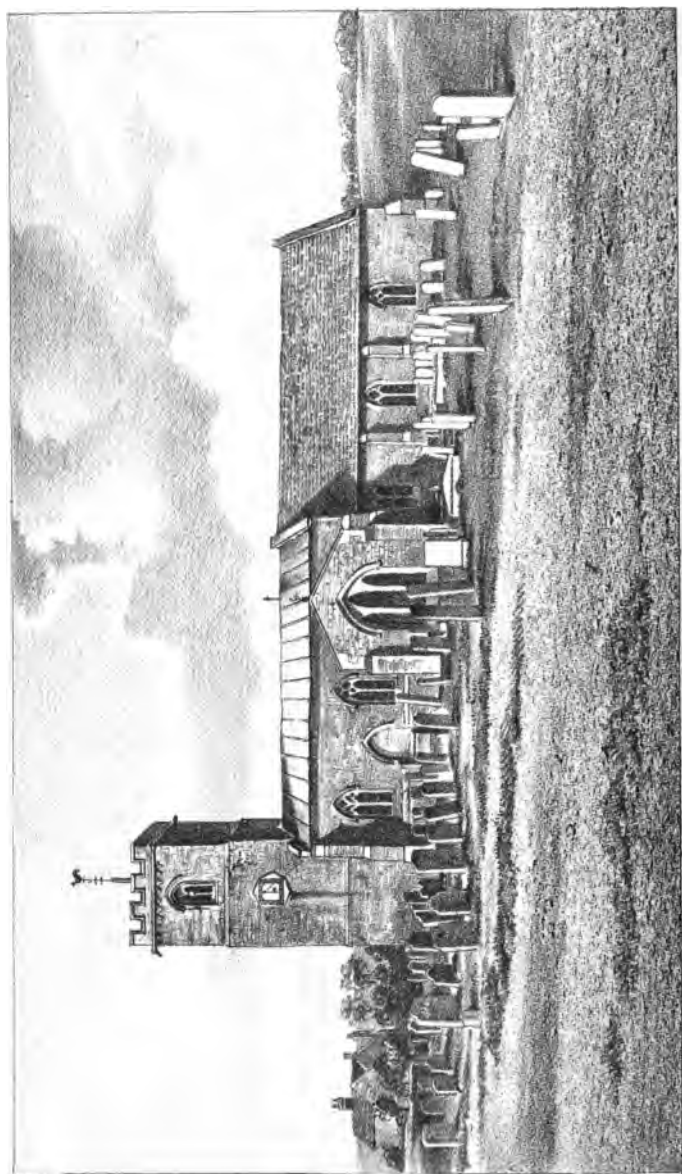
Presently, portions of the jambs of the doorway (for so it proved to be) were uncovered, apparently as perfect as the day on which they were set up. The upper part, or head, of the doorway was gone, but from broken fragments dug out it was easy to determine its character. It was perfectly plain, without any attempt at ornament, and if not more ancient, certainly not later, than early Norman in style and workmanship,—another proof, by the way, of the early date at which the Castle was built. The jambs are of the same thickness as the head, and have a plain chamfer on the outer edge, terminating where the abacus or impost would be in later specimens. From these, without impost of any kind, sprung the simple semicircular head, which completed the doorway. From threshold to top it is nearly ten feet high, and when perfect would be a striking object from its chaste and severe simplicity.

From each side of the doorway a wall runs forward to meet the outer and lower wall above-named, and forming a passage six feet long in front of the doorway. As to the particular use of this outer line of wall I am unable to offer a conjecture, unless it supported a battlement running round this part of the Keep at the height of ten or twelve feet from the level of the inner yard.

Previous statements have shown that the time of the second and final destruction must be placed in the period of the great struggle between the Houses of York and Lancaster. The excavations prove beyond question the manner of its overthrow. I can only hope that some future inquirer may gather and record fuller details, and make further discoveries in the old Hill, so full of historic interest and associations.

There is one legend connected with the Castle Hill which is too good to be lost. Like many other such places, it is said to have an underground passage, and this passage, as the story relates, communicates with Park House, about two miles to the north-west.

Nearly half way between these is a Swallow-hole, *i.e.*, a hole in the ground near a watercourse, into which the water runs and is swallowed up. One day a Scotch piper, passing through the village, became interested in the ruins, and heard of the underground passage. His curiosity was aroused. An offer to accompany any man in the village along this dark road to Park House failed to procure a volunteer. No one dared to brave its unknown horrors. At length the piper's valour mounted to the occasion: he would explore the passage himself. It was agreed that he should play his bagpipes as he went, and the timid Bythamites should trace his course by the sound. All went on well and merry as a marriage-bell, till the Swallow-hole was reached, when the subterranean music suddenly ceased, and neither Scotchman nor pipes was ever seen or heard afterwards. From that day forth the Swallow-hole obtained a new name, and was known as the Piper's-hole.



THE CHURCH
(SOUTH-VIEW)

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHURCH.

“Perished!—

Those mighty walls and lofty towers,
Where human greatness made its home,
And Pride, and Wealth, and Power once dwelt !
Those sacred fanes where Piety
In selfish loneliness was found,
They too are swept-away ! Not so
The Parish Church—the house of God—
Where worship both the poor and meek :
That still survives ! It seems as tho’
Time’s hand may touch but lightly there.”

A PARISH Church and a ruined Castle in close proximity must frequently suggest thoughts such as these. The Castle, often a mere mound, shows the instability of worldly things ; ever saying, in mute yet, thrilling eloquence, “All the glory of man is as the flower of grass ;”¹ while the Church, by its mere ¹ Pet. i. 24. continuance, speaks of the eternal and unchangeable. The residence of feudal grandeur has crumbled into dust. The noble families who once possessed it are extinct, and scarce remembered. But the Church is still firm, strong, and enduring.

The site of an ancient castle, or the crumbling remains of a monastery, awaken curiosity. A village church, probably of as early a date as either, and more venerable as their survivor by centuries, is passed by with little or no notice. The reason chiefly lies in the fact that each of the former was an exaggeration. A grand old fortress, with its alternations of peace and war, of straitness of siege and glory of pageant, together with the martial spirit of its lords and the pride of its high-born dames, presented a picture of worldly pomp in its most unmiti-

gated form. The cloistered solitude, on the other hand, which aimed at complete separation from the world and its vanities, was an exaggeration of religion. Consequently an air of romance clings to both. But with the Parish Church it is not so. The tenor of its course has been even. Its mission has been to moderate extremes. Standing in the midst of the village, with its tower or spire pointing heavenwards, it is an emblem of its own work. By its sacred teaching and its holy services it mingles with men's daily lives, and seeks to sanctify them. It softens hard hearts, subdues cruel passions, purifies and elevates. Instead of flying from the world in despair, it labours to make it peaceful and happy; it strives to convert the wilderness into a smiling garden; and for this purpose, like its Divine Head when on earth, it associates itself with the joys and sorrows of the people, and seeks, by influencing their hearts and wills, to effect what human laws and human restraints never could effect. Within the grey walls of the Parish Church the bride seeks a blessing on her new life and responsibilities; there the mother dedicates her offspring to God; and thither the widow brings her dead, that where she received the partner of her life there she may resign him, and commend herself to Him who is the "husband of the widow" and the "father of the fatherless."

An edifice which for ages has thus blended with and sanctified the daily life of thousands, must have gathered round it many and tender associations. Little or no record of them may remain. Like the trace of the last wave on the beach, the memory of their fleeting joys and sorrows was left for a brief space by one generation to be quickly effaced by those of the next. Still, though individually unrecorded and forgotten, their accumulated influence has not passed away. No one can stand in an old church or churchyard, and recollect that for hundreds of years that spot has witnessed and shared in the

happiness and sorrow of so many generations, without feeling that, if it had no other dedication, it is a sacred place. Its walls are hallowed by long-continued prayer and praise, and the soil of its church-yard is hallowed by the dust it contains and the tears which have fallen upon it.

In the great majority of cases it is impossible to fix the date when the first Christian temple was erected in a given parish. It is within the range of possibility that some of our existing churches may occupy the site of earlier ones, in which ancient Britons worshipped. Others may have had their origin in the fane of some heathen deity, which, after our Saxon forefathers embraced the faith, was purified and consecrated as a place of Christian worship. Many others were founded by Saxon nobles, for church-building was much encouraged among that people. Archbishop Theodore (A.D. 680) offered to the laity, who would build and endow churches on their estates, the right of the perpetual patronage of those churches. Hence originated lay patronage in the English Church. And at a later date no churl who had thriven could be admitted to the rank of *Thane*, or gentleman, unless he had a *church* upon his estate.²

² Spelman
Conc. I., 406.

Impelled by such inducements to erect them, Parish Churches became numerous. Some were built of wood and some of stone. But during the ravages of the Danes, many of them were burnt or levelled with the ground.

When, or by whom, the *first* church at Castle Bytham was built, is unknown. It is hid in the far-off mists of time. But the earliest mention of it that I have seen appears under circumstances which forbid us to assign to it a later than Saxon date. In the year 1115, or only 49 years after the Conquest, the Church of Castle Bytham was given by Stephen Earl of Albemarle to a French monastery.

Now, had the Church been built by Stephen, or by

Drogo de Brewer, the deed of gift would probably have said so. It contains no such statement. And further, had it been erected by either of these, the style of architecture would have been early Norman. It would have had massive pillars, with heavy round-headed arches. Whereas the oldest work in the present structure is that known as late, or transition, Norman,—a style which prevailed from A.D. 1145 to 1190. There must therefore have been an older, that is, a Saxon Church, standing at the time of Earl Stephen's gift.

A careful review of all the circumstances disposes me to regard William de Colville as the builder of the present edifice. When he and his family came to inhabit the Castle, between the years 1180 and 1185, he probably found the Saxon Church in a ruinous condition; and as the style of the earliest portions of the present Church coincides so accurately with that date, we cannot be far wrong in supposing that he removed the older structure, and built the present one, which is dedicated to St. James.

As a whole, the Church of Castle Bytham has no pretensions to beauty. The great length of the chancel destroys all idea of proportion; and the eye takes further offence when comparing the flat wall of the south side of the nave, and its high-placed windows, with the arcade and aisle on the north. The chancel arch is too narrow, and the one in the tower, intended to correspond with it, is a clumsy performance. Still, with all these drawbacks, it has many curious and very interesting features.

In plan it is cruciform, with the tower at the west end of the nave, a north aisle, and a porch, which is also on the north side. The chancel measures internally 50ft. by 17ft.; the nave, 45ft. 6in. by 22ft. 6in.; the aisle, 30ft. by 9ft. 6in.; the north transept, 14ft. by 16ft. 8in.; the south transept, 14ft. 10in. by 17ft. 4in.; and the tower, 12ft. 9in. by 9ft. 7in.

At various periods the building has undergone

alterations. Portions of the original fabric have been replaced by later work, till we find in it every style of architecture which prevailed from A.D. 1145 to 1360.

The tower and nave-arcade are transition Norman, and are the only portions of the Church preserving their original character. In these, as in every other part, some curious features are observable. In the tower is a badly-executed lancet-arch, standing on pillars of a Norman character. This and other evidently later work in the tower may be accounted for by the fact that in 1412, Lady Alice Basset left £10 "to the fabric of the campanill (bell-tower) of the Church of Bytham." Ten pounds at that date would be worth £200 now, and would pay for a good deal of patchwork.

The arcade consists of three bays with circular arches. The pillars were originally circular, with octagonal bases and capitals. Those adjoining the east and west walls retain their proper form, while the remaining two have been converted into an octagonal shape. But, curiously enough, instead of making the sides of the shaft correspond with those of the base and capital, they made the angle of the former intersect the side of the latter.

Next in point of antiquity are the north transept window—a triple lancet—and the arch uniting the aisle to this transept. These are of beautiful workmanship, in good preservation, and date from about 1220.

The chancel is unusually long, and possesses several features worthy of observation. A portion of the masonry of its outer walls is particularly good, especially on the north side. Originally it had three windows in the north wall, corresponding with those in the south wall, but the one next the transept has been blocked up. The door is on the north side, and between it and the altar steps is a canopied tomb.

The finest feature in the chancel is the east window.

This is a beautiful specimen of geometrical work, consisting of three lights with massive mullions and foliated circles in the head. The doorway is of the same style. Both belong to the latter half of the 13th century.

The remaining windows of the chancel—three on the south side and two on the north—are of two lights with reticulated tracery, curvilinear in character, and were probably inserted at the same time as the tomb.

That the tomb is an insertion is evident. The outer wall behind it affords ample proof. It is a fine specimen of curvilinear work with a crocketed ogee canopy. There is no inscription upon it, which is much to be regretted; but from its general character it may be assigned to a date between the years 1315 and 1360. It was therefore erected by one of the Colviles to commemorate some member of that family.

Underneath the chancel is a vault belonging to the Tennant family, and until lately used as the place of their interment.

As already stated, in A.D. 1115, Stephen Earl of Albemarle gave the Church of Castle Bytham to the monks of Albemarle in Normandy. It was usual, in those days, for noblemen, who were ambitious of founding monasteries and were niggardly of their lands, to give to them, instead of land, the patronage of churches. This enabled the monks to send a member of their own convent, who was in holy orders, to discharge the pastoral duties of the parish, and then appropriate the profits of the living to the uses of the monastery. In this way monks were maintained on the endowments of the parochial clergy. It was an iniquitous proceeding altogether, which ought never to have been tolerated by the bishops; and the evils it inflicted on the Church were many and serious. In the first place, the monks grievously neglected the parish. When the bishops would allow this no longer, they hired, at the cheapest rate, the services of a curate.

Afterwards, as the scandal of impropriations became unendurable, the bishops compelled the monasteries to provide a fixed and resident minister for each church, and to assign him a definite stipend. This was usually the small tithes, or a miserable pension—the monks keeping the rest for themselves. Hence originated vicarages, that of Bytham among others. The second great mischief to the Church, resulting from this state of things, was the loss of more than half her patrimony; for, at the suppression of the monasteries, all the Church property they held passed into lay hands, and has never been restored. Thus, by the gift of Earl Stephen, a distant French monastery was charged with the spiritual oversight of the parish, and enabled to receive the endowments intended for its resident minister.

The following Charter of Confirmation shows that these monks retained possession of it upwards of forty years:—

“THE CHARTER OF CONFIRMATION OF CHURCHES IN HIS DIOCESE, BY ROBERT, BISHOP OF LINCOLN.”³

³ Dugdale,
Mon. Ang.
Tom. ii. p. 999.

“Robert, by the grace of God Bishop of Lincoln, to all the faithful of Holy Church, greeting. In the due administration of our office it is incumbent upon us to take care of the interest of religious men for the future, and that the donations by which they should be maintained should in like manner, as they were reasonably given by the faithful and made good by written documents, be confirmed by episcopal authority. Hence it is that, yielding free assent to the just petition of our beloved children, the monks of Albemarle, we have granted of our paternal affection, and by these present writings do confirm to them the Churches and all other possessions whatsoever in our diocese which have been rightly and duly given to the Church of St. Martin at Albemarle and to the monks there serving God, by those noblemen, Stephen Earl of Albemarle, and William his son;—the Church of

Barrow with its appendages, and the tythe of the Lordship of Willesby; the Church of Grotesbi and tythe of the Lordship of Andleby; the Church of Carlton with its appendages, and *the Church of Bytham with all its appendages*. Therefore on all those who observe and respect the rights of the said Church (of St. Martin), we entreat the mercy and blessing of God, but contrariwise, on those who seize the same and unrighteously trouble them, we denounce the vengeance of the final judgment. Given in the year of the incarnation of our Lord, 1156. Witnesses: PHILIP, Abbot of Thornton; REINFRIDUS, Canon of the same; RALPH, Abbot of Louth Park; THOMAS DE BRACHENB, Monk of the same; ROBERT, Archdeacon of Lincoln, &c., &c."

By some means the patronage of our Church was next transferred to the monastery of Thornton, near Barton-on-Humber in this county. The first seven vicars mentioned in the list hereafter given were appointed by the Abbot and monks of Thornton. During the episcopate of Bishop Gravesend (1258–1279) the Church of "Byham cum Helewell" was appropriated to the commons of the Canons of Lincoln.*

Thus in the ecclesiastical taxation ordered by Pope Nicholas IV. (about 1291):

Appropriate Churches of the Chapter of Lincoln:—

The Church of Byham and Helewell.....	£20	0	0
The Vicarage of the same	6	13	4

About this time the evil of impropriations, above alluded to, had reached its climax. So impoverished were the parochial clergy that many of them had to drop half their sacred character to earn a livelihood,

* The same Bishop procured the advowson of Little Bytham to the See of Lincoln. The patronage of Little Bytham would then be in the Bishop, that of Castle Bytham in the Dean and Chapter. About A.D. 1750, the livings were united, and the Bishop, and the Dean and Chapter presented alternately.

and thought themselves happy if they could obtain employment of the lay lords, either to act as their stewards, to hold their courts, or to collect their rents.

Bishop Oliver Sutton, who began to preside over the See of Lincoln in the year 1280, was a strenuous opponent of these abuses. As far as possible he compelled the monks and other impropiators to allow the poor vicars a reasonable subsistence. And it is with pleasure we learn that Bytham benefited by his efforts in the cause of right and justice.

In an ancient book of institutions in the Registry of the Diocese of Lincoln, is an entry relating to Bitham and Helewell. On the appointment of Gerard Wenge, apparently in the year 1291, the Dean of Beltislaw was ordered to hold an inquisition to ascertain the various sources of income belonging to the Church of Castle Bytham, and the outgoings chargeable against it, that a proper provision might be made for the vicar.

By this inquisition it was found that the rectorial endowments consisted of—

	£	s.	d.
3 bovates, and 13½ acres of land, worth 16 shillings			
per bovate.....	2	10	0
Tithes of corn at Bytham, Counthorpe, and Creeton	20	0	0
Tithes of Hay	1	9	0
Tithes of Hay de la Launde	0	9	0
Tithes of wool and lambs at Bytham, Counthorpe, and Creeton	3	0	0
Live principal, lesser tithes, oblations, &c.....	4	0	0
Pasturage for 24 oxen in the Park, worth	1	0	0
Pasturage for 81 swine in the Park, for 6 weeks ..	0	2	0
For Chaplain of Castle, and tithes of Mill	0	3	0
For assizes belonging to the Church of Bytham.....	0	12	6
In Wood . . . Carucates, worth	0	4	4
Of the Lord's hunting, 3 wild animals			
Tithes of corn at Helewell and Ouneby (Aunby)...	7	6	8
Altarge, with all things thereto belonging.....	3	6	8
	£44	3	2

There was land in the village, belonging to the Church of Helewell, suitable for a manse for the vicar, but there were upon it some houses, built as dark rooms only.

At Bitham, the document proceeds to say, there is usually one chaplain and his clerk, and that priest finds another priest in his place, who celebrates at Counthorpe* on the six principal festivals, and the same priest comes every Sunday, and ministers to the parishioners at Counthorpe holy water and holy bread, and says the memorial for the day and the prayers. .

The rector also finds sufficient light about the Great Altar, and one lamp. He also finds a suitable chaplain to celebrate in the Church of Helewell, and this chaplain serves the parishioners of Helewell and Ouneby; and he finds also all the ornaments of the Church except the chalice, the missal, and the vessel for the holy water in the three places, that is to say, in Bitham, Helewell, and Counthorpe. He, moreover, keeps in repair the three chancels, viz., one at Bitham, another at Helewell, and the third at Counthorpe; and he pays the archdeacon's procurations for the three places, and pays in synodals also six shillings.

The Bishop, having conferred with his Chapter, decreed that the vicarage should consist of

A suitable manse, to be built by the Chapter of Lincoln;

Altarage of all kinds at Bitham and Helewell, with all things belonging thereto, without exception;

The tithes of Hay de la Launde;

The sum paid for the chaplain of the Castle;

The tithes of the mill.

The pasturage of the oxen and swine in the Park, with the tithes of wild animals and wood, to be reserved to the Chapter of Lincoln.

The vicar, besides himself, to have two chaplains—one at Bitham and one at Helewell—to bear all the ordinary burdens, and to find books and ornaments.

The Chapter to repair and rebuild the chancels as often as may be necessary, and to pay yearly for the

* For further mention of Counthorpe Chapel, see Addenda.

tithe of lambs and wool, now collected by the vicar for his maintenance, the sum of 60 shillings.

It is probably owing to this ordinance that the living of Castle Bytham was not impoverished as much as some others in the neighbourhood.

In the "Valor Ecclesiasticus" of Henry VIII. (A.D. 1535),⁴ the Church of Bitham cum Haliwell was valued at £9 16s. 8d. The rectory there was appropriated to the monastery of the Cathedral Church of Lincoln. Thomas Scone was vicar, and his income was derived as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
House,* with land thereto belonging	0	6	8
Cemetery fees	0	1	0
Easter offerings	1	6	8
Offerings at the four ember seasons	0	10	0
Offerings at St. Mary's, Hollywell, and other small offerings	0	10	0
For swine, geese, poultry, wax, &c.	0	13	4
Tithes of the mill at Hollywell	0	2	8
Lambs and wool	4	10	0
Hay (infra claus')	0	3	4
Gross value.....	£8	3	8
Out of this there had to be paid for synodals and procurations	0	10	2
Leaving the clear annual value only	7	13	6
And out of this again had to be paid tenths.....	0	15	4
Net value	£6	18	2

Thomas Sampy was chaplain of the chantry, and received for himself, as a pension from the Abbot of Wolstan, in the county of Leicester, £5, and for house and land belonging thereto, 42 shillings. Out of this he had to pay to the Cathedral Church at Lincoln 4 shillings, and in tenths 13 shillings and 9 pence; leaving him a net income of £6 4s. 3d.†

In Bishop Neale's time, about 1616, the living of Great Bytham was valued at £20. "William Jolle (no graduate and no preacher) was vicar. The

* It is not known where this house stood, or what became of it.

† Little Bytham is entered in the same Valuation as follows:

⁵ Willes.

Chapter of Lincoln was patron; the number of communicants was 200."⁵

⁶ Domestic Series.

Chas. I. p. 69.

Among the State Papers for the year 1637-1638, is a statement of the changes in the tithes of Creeton and Castle Bytham resulting from the enclosure.⁶

⁷ Cal. of State Papers for 1664-5.

In May, 1665, a great conventicle was expected to be held here, composed of several people of quality, to the number of 200 or 300, out of this and the neighbouring county of Rutland, who asked the minister for the use of the Church. Dr. Winter, the then incumbent, being forewarned of the meeting, prevented its taking place. William Trollope of Casewick gave public notice of it to Lord Campden.⁷

In Bacon's "Liber Regis," Castlebitham is enumerated among the discharged livings of the clear yearly value of £29 6s., and in the King's Books at £7 13s. 6d. "Castlebitham, V. (St. James), with Halliwell, alias Holwell, and Awnby. Synods and proxies 10s. 2d. United to Little Bytham. For house with land belonging thereto, 6s. 8d. Tithes of hay, lambs, wool, bees, honey, &c., with the tithe of the mill at Holywell. Dean and Chapter of Lincoln patrons alternately with the Bishop."

In the north transept was a chantry chapel, dedicated

Humphrey Pollard, Rector.	£	s.	d.
For manse, with land attached	0	6	8
Hay and corn	2	19	4
Lambs and wool	1	6	8
Oblations for the year	0	18	8
Swine, geese, &c., and cemetery fees	0	7	0

£5 18 4

Payments:—

	s.	d.
Synodals and Procurations.....	10	2
Pension paid of ancient right to the Rector of Careby	20	0

Clear value.....	4	8	2
Tenths	0	8	10

£3 19 4

The Rector of Careby received in pentecostals from Little Bytham 20 shillings, and paid to the Monastery of Peterborough, of ancient right, 7 shillings.

to St. John the Baptist, and founded, in all probability, in 1351, by Lord Robert de Colville. (See p. 56.) The remains of the piscina, or water drain, which was always near the altar, may still be seen. Alice, relict of Lord Basset, bequeathed to this chantry the sum of one hundred shillings, in A.D. 1412. (See p. 60.)

At the Easter vestry, April 15th, 1745, it was decided to recast the lead on the Church roof. "This day agreed, at a vestry holden at Castle Bytham, with Robert Linin, Plumber and Glazier, to take up two old sheets of lead off the Church of Castle Bytham; to new cast them, and lay them down again at seven pounds of lead to the foott, and also the glazing work at forty-five shillings per year, so long as the said leads are all done to the satisfaction of the said parish; in witness whereof I have sett my hand, the day and date above, the parrish to find fuell and carriage of the lead.

ROBERT LINNIN.

SAMUEL HOPKINSON.

EDWD. PAWLETT. L. HURST, Churchwarden."

"May, 26, 1746. Then taken up ten sheets of lead, to be paid £2 5 per year, two years' pay due Easter next."⁸

⁸ Old Parochial
Account Book.

On the 19th of June, 1844, the living of Holywell, which from the earliest mention of it, about 1257, had always been united to Bytham, was separated from Bytham and consolidated with Careby.

In 1858, June—November, the sum of £500 was spent in restoring the Church of Castle Bytham. The south transept, which had entirely disappeared, was rebuilt; large accumulations of earth on the south side were removed; and the interior of the edifice cleaned and reseated. The Rev. P. E. Miles was then curate, and Mr. J. Dawson, of Park House, churchwarden. Among the principal subscribers were Lord Willoughby D'Eresby, £100; Lord Aveland, £25; The Dean and Chapter of Lincoln, £25; and Archdeacon Bonney, £20. The Lord Bishop of Lincoln (Dr. Jackson) preached at the opening service in the morning, and

the Rev. A. S. Wilde, rector of Gretford, in the evening. The collections were over £40. Nearly the whole of the balance was provided by the parish.

In 1859, the Rectory of Little Bytham was separated from Castle Bytham. For some time previously the patronage of the consolidated benefices had been vested in the Bishop and Dean and Chapter of Lincoln, who presented alternately. Castle Bytham was now assigned to the Bishop, and Little Bytham to the Dean and Chapter. Couthorpe was transferred to Creeton about the same time.

In the same year a vicarage-house was built at a cost of £1,050, the money for which was borrowed of the governors of Queen Anne's Bounty.

The present endowment of the vicarage consists of 335 acres of land in Castle Bytham, and 26 in Little Bytham. Its gross annual value is £480.

In 1868 the church-yard was enlarged by the addition of a rectangular piece of ground, on the south side,—the gift of R. Heathcote, Esq.

The following names occur as vicars of Castle Bytham :—

German Romanus	about	A.D. 1240	
Thoma Crispin	appointed	„	1245
Roger de Hendernas			
Richard Ringstede	appointed	„	1259
Gilbert de Bytham			
Simon de Gloucester	appointed	„	1262
Master Roger de			
Fuldoa, Archdea-	}	appointed	„ 1265*
con of Lincoln			
Gerard de Wenge	about	„	1291
Richard de Dornthorpe	„	„	1351
Thomas Scone	„	„	1535
William Idle	„	„	1567
William Jolle	„	„	1616
William Neale	„	„	1638
Mr. Farbeck			buried 11 Sept., 1658

* The names of these seven vicars are taken from a manuscript of extracts from the registers of the Diocese of Lincoln, in the British Museum. (Harl. MSS. 6950-6954.) The first mention of Swayfield in these extracts is in A. D. 1413.

Edward Laurence	appointed A.D. 1658	
Dr. Winter	about „ 1665	
Joseph Parry	appointed „ 1667	died 8 August, 1684
Francis Pretious	„ „ 1697	buried 12 August, 1729*
Jacob Dod	„ „ 1729	
Charles Potter	„ „ 1736	died 10 December, 1758†
... Whitworth	„ „ 1758	
Thomas ffanshaw } Middleton }	„ „ 1802	

This was the justly eminent Dr. Middleton, author of the celebrated "Treatise on the Doctrine of the Greek Article, applied to the Criticism and the Illustration of the New Testament;" a work which he published in 1808, during his incumbency of Castle Bytham. He was born in January, 1769, at Kedleston, in Derbyshire, and was the only son of the Rev. Thomas Middleton, of that place. He was educated at Christ's Hospital, thence proceeded to Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, where he took the degrees of B. A. 1792, M. A. 1795, and D. D. 1808. He entered upon his clerical duties at Gainsborough in 1792. In 1795, he was presented by the Bishop of Lincoln to the rectory of Tansor, Northamptonshire. In 1802, he obtained from the Bishop the consolidated livings of Castle and Little Bytham, which he was allowed to hold with Tansor. After becoming successively vicar of St. Pancras, Middlesex, and archdeacon of Huntingdon, he was appointed, on the recommendation of the Prince Regent, to be the first Bishop of Calcutta. He was consecrated on the 8th of May, 1814, at Lambeth Palace. Upon his arrival in India, Dr. Middleton was mainly instrumental in founding the Mission College in Calcutta. He died on the 8th of July, 1822, after a short but severe illness, in his 53rd year.⁹

⁹ Obituary
and Records,
p. 255.

C. Apthorpe Wheelwright, appointed A. D. 1811
Chas. C. Crackenthorp „ „ 1859

* Part of his gravestone may still be seen in the church floor, near the pulpit.

† The last resident vicar till 1859,—just a century.

The following are names of curates :—

William Gale	A. D. 1747-1750
Charles Potter. jun.	„ 1750-1758
Wade Gascoigne	„ 1758-1765
J. Northon	„ 1765-1768
John Myers	„ 1768-1774

The last-named gentleman was for many years domestic chaplain at Grimsthorpe Castle, rector of Wyberton, vicar of Swineshead, and for nearly fifty years in the commission of the peace for the county of Lincoln. He died at Shipley Hall, near Braceford, on the 11th of April, 1821, aged 83.¹⁰ A memorandum (placed in my hands by the Rev. J. Birch Reynardson, in which Mr. Myers' name appears) was made by one of Mr. Reynardson's ancestors at the time, and is well worth preserving among the clerical anecdotes of Lincolnshire in the last century. It shows that, however the country clergy might spend the last six days of the week, the first was anything but a day of rest for them. I give the memorandum verbatim:—"1st November, 1772, Sunday.—Mr. Myers and his curate from Edenham went first to Creeton; they read prayers; Myers preached and administered the Sacrament. The curate went on, read prayers and preached at Little Bytham; Myers followed and administered the Sacrament. Then the curate, named Marshall, rode on to Holywell, and read prayers, and before the Second Lesson, Myers came into church, and preached and administered the Sacrament. The curate left the church and proceeded to do duty at Swayfield, and thence to do the same at Edenham. Myers from Holywell went to perform morning service at Swinstead, and dine with Lord Brownlow Bertie,—as Myers said. (Note.) Was a quarter past 12 before the curate came to Holywell, tho' the appointed time was half-past eleven. 7th August, 1774.—Myers served Edenham, Grimsthorpe Chapel, Creeton, Swinstead, Swayfield, Castle Bytham, the feast day 4 o'clock; Mr. Marshall—Little Bytham, Holywell, Morton, and Hacconby."

¹⁰ Obituary
and Records,
p. 238.

Robert Nixon A.D. 1774—1780.
Christopher Cookson „ 1780—1782.

He became warden of Brown's Hospital in 1808, having previously filled the office of confrater of the house 23 years, so that he resided in the hospital 59 years. In 1808 he was presented to Wittering Rectory, and was formerly of St. John's College, Cambridge. He died at Stamford, at the age of 86, on the 12th of September, 1844.¹¹

¹¹ Obituary
and Records,
p. 358.

J. R. Deverell	A.D. 1802—1826.
William Tennant	„ 1826—1849.
John Butterfield	„ 1849—1856.
T. T. Day	„ 1856—1857.
P. E. Miles	„ 1857—1859.
John Wild	„ 1864—1870.

In a MS. volume in the British Museum, entitled “Antiquities of the County of Lincoln,”¹² is a list¹² Harl. 6829. of coats of arms formerly existing in the church windows of Castle and Little Bytham.

Castle Bitham, Fenestra Australis.

Arg. a plain Cross G.	...	...
Empaled {	Barry of 6 arg & B	...	Grey of Codnor.
	Verry ...	...	Beachamp of Hach.
Empaled {	Barry of 6 arg & B.	...	Grey.
	Or 3 piles G.	...	Basset.
Empaled {	Or a Lyon rampant double queue G.	Mallory.	
	Arg. 2 Roses, & a Canton G.	...	...
	Or, a Fesse G.	...	Colvill.

Bitham-Parva, Fenestra Orientalis, Cancelli.

Or, a plaine Cross Vert.	...	...	Hussey.
Barry of 6 Ermine & G.	...	...	Hussey.*
The crest a hind trippant arg. collered and chayned, or: in a Hawthorne bush.			

Orate pro aia Humfridi Polard
Rectoris hujus Ecclie,
qui hanc fenestram fieri fecit.
Scus Medardus. Scus Gildardus.
Fenestra Orientalis ad dextram.
Hugo Wayn fecit istam Fenestram
in honore Sce Marie & Sci Nicholai.

* This is elsewhere supposed to be the arms of the Kirtons.

Translated—

Pray for the soul of Humphrey Polard,
 Rector of this Church,
 who put up this Window.
 Saint Medardus Saint Gildardus

East Window, right hand side.
 Hugh Wayn made this Window
 in honour of St. Mary and St. Nicholas.

In the tower of Castle Bytham Church are three bells, bearing the following inscriptions:—

See Petre ora pro nobis. ✠
 (Saint Peter pray for us.)

This is one of the oldest class of church bells. They have no date upon them, but bear the name of the saint to whom they were dedicated, and the 'ora pro nobis.' It is pretty well ascertained that they belong to the fourteenth century.

✠ CVM :: VOCO :: AD ECCLESIAM :: VENITE. 1618.
 (When I call, come to Church. 1618.)

Thomas Morris made mee. 1664.

Between the first floor of the tower and the bell-chamber is a ladder, the sides of which are made of an old maypole. It tells its own tale:

IHIS WARE
 THE MAY POVLE 1660

In the chancel are two pewter flagons, with the inscription: "Given by Stephen Heansworth, for the use of the Church of Castle Bytham. Añ. Dom̃::: 1646::: RR." There are also two brass candlesticks for the Communion Table; two alms dishes, of wood; and one Service Book.

Suspended from the roof in the nave is a large and handsome brass chandelier, of twenty branches, arranged in two rows: "The gift of John Coverley, Gent. Anno Domini 1816."

EPITAPHS.

On the east wall of the chancel, on a small slab :

Sacred
to the Memory of
The Hon^{ble} WILLIAM MOORE,
who departed this Life
Nov^r 20, 1810.
Aged 72 years.

The person thus commemorated was the Honourable William Moore, of Saperton, Waterford, and the second son of Stephen, Viscount Mountcashell. He died at Castle Bytham while under the medical care of Dr. Willis, of Shillingthorpe Hall.

On the south wall of the chancel:

Sacred
to the Memory of
WILLIAM HOPKINSON
who died the 14th July 1793.
Aged 62 years.

Also
ELIZABETH Relict of
WILLIAM HOPKINSON
who died 23 April 1817.
Aged 86 years.

Sacred
to the Memory of
MARY ELIZABETH wife of
HENRY HOPKINSON Esq.
who died
the 10th day of October 1810.
Aged 48 years.

Also two of their children
HENRY and ELIZABETH.
Her children arise up, and call Her
blessed, Her husband also, and he
praiseth Her.

Sacred
to the Memory of
HENRY HOPKINSON Esq.
(only son of WILLIAM HOPKINSON
and ELIZABETH his wife)
who departed this Life
July the 17th 1825.
In the 71st year of his age.
He served the office of High Sheriff in the
County of Lincoln in the Year 1799.

This monument of their affection was erected by his seven
surviving Daughters.

On a marble slab on the north wall of the chancel:

Sacred
to the Memory of
LUCY wife of WALTER LARKHAM Esq. Surgeon.
and 6th daughter of HENRY HOPKINSON Esq.
who died in London of malignant cholera,
6th August 1832.
Aged 29 years,
And in the 7th month of her Marriage.

H 2

On a stone in the floor near the pulpit :

Sacred to y^e Memory of
The Reverend M^r FRANCIS
PRETIUS Late Vicar of
this Church, who after
having ruled well for
... Years, Died Aug^r y^e 19.
(Broken off.)

On the walls of the nave :

Sacred to the Memory of
JOHN COVERLEY, Gent.
who departed this life Feb. 26. 1816.
Aged 57 Years.

Also to the grateful remembrance of his
dearly beloved Parents ;
JOHN COVERLEY, his Father,
died Jan. 26. 1787, Aged 77 years.
JANE COVERLEY, his Mother,
died Jan. 4, 1815, Aged 84 years.

In Memory of
JOHN COVERLEY, Gent.
who died 31st December, A.D. 1846.
Aged 49 years.

This testimony of
parental grief and affection is placed
to the Memory of
JOHN, son of JOHN and ELIZABETH WILCOX of Park House,
Who died at the age of 21.
on the 30 day of November 1832.

Also
of ELIZA, their daughter, the wife of EDWARD PEARS of
Thorney, Cambridgeshire, who died on the 18th of August 1833,
in the sixth month of her marriage, at the age of 26, and
whose remains are deposited in the Church Yard, Thorney.

Also
ELIZABETH WILCOX
Mother of the above
who died February 10th 1861.
in the 88th Year
of her age.

Sacred
to the Memory of WILLIAM EXTON
who departed this life
Jan. 15th 1789
in the 59th year of his age.

The same tablet also commemorates SARAH wife of WILLIAM
EXTON and ELIZABETH, their daughter.

THE REGISTERS.

The register-books are in a fair state of preservation. The first begins on the Feast of St. Michael, 1567. The earliest entry is in the middle of the first volume. The second leaf has been removed from its proper place, and is to be found, in a mutilated condition, inserted in the year 1626.

William Idle was then vicar.

In the first year of entry—viz., from Michaelmas, 1567, to the same date, 1568—there are 15 baptisms, 3 burials, and 4 marriages. In the next year are 11 baptisms, 4 burials, and 2 marriages. Comparing these with the two last years (1868-69), I find the baptisms 51 (an increase of 25), the burials 29 (an increase of 22), while the marriages remain precisely the same, that is 6.

In 1636 the baptisms were 16, the marriages 2, and the burials 5.

In 1642 is the following entry: "The fatall battell at Edge Hill was fought Octo. y^e 23."

From the Annunciation, 1641, to the same date, 1642, there is neither burial nor marriage; and from 1643 to 1648—five years—there is no entry of marriage.

In 1653 Abraham Sharman was chosen parish registrar. This gentleman, despising the old name of Castle Bytham, adopted in its stead the more euphonious and classic appellation of Bytham Magna.

In 1659 is the following:—"August 28th, anno 1659, collected in Castle Bytham parish y^e som of seven shillings and on peney for y^e relief of y^e distressed persons of Southweld, otherwise Soilbay, in the county of Soffolk, who were dishabited by a sodden ffire."

For the years 1689 to 1696 I find no records. They have probably been lost or destroyed.

In 1714-5 there were 8 baptisms, 4 burials, and

1 marriage; and in the next year, 9 baptisms, 1 burial, and no marriage.

In 1729 Jacob Dod was vicar. If Jacob Dod's oddities in other respects equalled his spelling, Jacob Dod was decidedly odd. Here are a few specimens: "dawter," "fabwary," "parrish," "Bacor" (baker), "Trew" (true), "shuck" (such), "Natthanol," "Vicker," "Maryed," "widdo."

The year 1737 opened sadly for many families in this parish. From January 11 to April 11, inclusive, there are entered no fewer than 19 burials. Some epidemic must have swept over the place, devastating it with unusual fury, and in the midst of it Jacob Dod disappears. Whether he fell a victim, or the evil disease terrified him to such a degree that he resigned the living and fled, I know not. There is no mention of his burial.

The last entry in Jacob Dod's handwriting is—

"Mathew Judson buried March y^e 30. 1736-7.

Jacob dod vicker, Samuall hopkissison Churchwarand."

He then added: "a True Regester of all shuck parsons has have Been baptized Married and buried in 1736. Lade day past."

"A Trew Regester of all such parsons as hath Been Baptized from Lade day for y^e yeere 1737."

In the year 1743 we meet with a much worse matter than Jacob Dod's spelling. The subjoined entries reveal a state of culpable negligence which I hope has few parallels:—

"An account of the Births, Marriages, and Burials for the year 1743 was delivered into the Bishop's visitation in the year 1744, but the copy of it was lost, which was ye reason of its not being inserted here."

"When I came to the Curacies of the Bithams, Holywell, Counthorp, and Oneby, which was on the 12th day of November, Ann. Dom. 1758, for which see page 53 of this Register, I found there had been

no Register kept in any of these places for the seven preceding years: wherefore I got what information I could, and set down those few things which I could come to the knowledge of from the memorandums of the Rev. Mr. Potter, junr. (the last curate of these places, and who died on the 11th day of November, 1758), and the clerk of Castle Bitham. From the year 1752 to the end of the month 8ber, 1758, there is no register in the Castle Bitham Book. In Little Bitham Book there has been from the year 1751 to the year 1758 no account kept of the Christenings, Marriages, or Burials of that Parish. In Holywell Register there has been the same neglect from the year 1750 to the year 1758, as may be seen by consulting the Register: and by having recourse to the Registers of the other above-mentioned Parishes will be evidenced the Truth of what has been related concerning them also. The following account relates to Castle Bytham Parish, and was taken from Mr. Charles Potter Junior's and the Clerk of Castle Bitham's Memorandums."

The confusion of dates and pages for a few years about this time is very perplexing.

In 1799 we have a little more choice spelling: "Sun" (son), "Rabart," "Franccies," "Tealor" (tailor), "Pawper."

CHARITIES.

"Endymion Cannyngc Esq of Brooke in the county of Rutland Gave £10 to be put out to use for the poor of Castle Bytham, the Interest thereof to be distributed amongst the poor upon St. Thomas's Day for ever according to the discretion of the Minister and Churchwarden and Overseers of the Poor of Castle Bytham Aforesaid."

"John Cade of Castle Bytham also gave Ten Pounds, the Interest thereof to be distributed in

bread amongst the Poor of Castle Bytham aforesaid yearly for ever."

The above are copied from a board hanging in the tower.

"Mrs. Lydia Lee, late of Stamford in the County of Lincoln, gave the sum of Twenty Shillings a year to the poor of Castle Bytham to be paid on St. Thomas's Day for ever, out of Lands lying in Market Overton in the county of Rutland. And likewise she gave the sum of Ten Shillings to the Minister of Castle Bytham to preach a Sermon in memory of Mrs. Lydia Lee late of Stamford on the 2nd Sunday in November for ever. 1716."

"Mrs. Hannah Wills, widow of William Wills of Exton, Gent. gave the sum of Ten Pounds the Interest of the same to be paid to the Poor on St. Thomas's Day yearly for ever. 1720."

"Mr. Nicholas Mills of Castle Bytham, bachelor, gave the sum of Ten Pounds the Interest of the same to be paid to the Poor on St. Nicholas' day yearly for ever. 1733."

"Jacob Dod, Vicar; John Green Church Warden."

"April 18. 1793. Mr. Robert Hurst left the sum of Fifty Pounds to the Poor of Castle Bytham; the Interest of which to be given away yearly."

These are on a board at the west end of the church.

"The charities left by Hannah Wills, Nicholas Mills,¹⁸ Robert Hurst, Endymion Cannyng, and John Cade, were vested in William Hopkinson, in whose family they continued till the 18th of November, 1828, when the executors of Henry Hopkinson, Esq., transferred in respect of them £55 11s. 3d. New 4 per Cent. Annuities, then standing in his name, into those of the Rev William Tenant, John Coverley, Charles Ormond, and John Berridge; and also paid them £40, with which £38 15s. 8d. more was purchased in the same stock.

"In respect of Mrs. Lydia Lee's charity, the

¹⁸ Report of
Charity Com-
missioners,
p. 325.

Hopkinson family annually distributed the 30s. in the manner directed by the donor ; but at the time of the transfer mentioned above, the executors of Henry Hopkinson, not being able to identify the land so stated to be charged, added to the before-mentioned stock £37 10s. as an equivalent for the rent-charge.

"The whole amount of stock in respect of these several charities is £131 11s. 11d. now in the 3½ per Cents. Reduced.

"The dividends, amounting to £4 12s., are distributed amongst the poor in coals and money at Christmas. The minister does not preach a sermon, nor does he receive his 10s., which forms part of the sum applied as above."

According to a return of the Lincolnshire Charities, ordered by the House of Commons and published in 1870, the amount of "Mills and others" is returned at £3 19s. 1d., and the school at £60.

CHAPTER X.

THE SCHOOL.

THE first step towards providing instruction for the poor of Castle Bytham was taken in the year 1765. At a meeting held on the 9th of May, "It was agreed by the Principal Inhabitants, &c. &c. for the consideration and helping of Poor children to learning," that, "we do hereby agree and freely consent to allow to be paid out of the Town land the sum of Five Pounds to an able Master for the said Poor children as shall be hereafter agreed on.

"Witness our hands,

"THOMAS WILLCOX,

"JOHN COVERLEY,

"RICHARD PAWLETT,¹

"&c. &c."

¹ Old Parochial Accounts.

At the enclosure, completed in 1807, there was allotted to the parishioners of Castle Bytham, in lieu of, and full satisfaction for, all their right of common and other interests whatsoever in, over, and upon the lands and grounds directed to be divided and enclosed, a piece of land in Holywell Field containing 52 acres 3 roods 20 perches.²

² Award.

"By indenture of lease and re-lease, dated 30th and 31st May, 1814,³ the latter being made between John Willcox, then churchwarden of Castle Bytham, of the first part; Peter Lord Gwyder and several others, proprietors and principal inhabitants of Castle Bytham, of the second part; and the Rev. Robert Deverall, minister of the said parish, and six others, of the third part; reciting that the premises thereafter described had been awarded by the Commis-

³ Report of Charity Commissioners, p. 326.

sioners upon the enclosure of the said parish, dated 18th September, 1807, to the then churchwarden and his successors, subject to the trusts on which he or they held the same, and that no trusts had been hitherto declared of the said estate, but that the rents and profits had been from time to time applied to different purposes for the benefit of the said parish, and that it had been determined at a vestry that the said premises should, for the welfare of the said parish, be conveyed by the said churchwardens to the said parties of the third part, to the uses thereafter mentioned: it was witnessed, that the said John Willcox, by the appointment of the said parties of the second part, released to the said parties of the third part, and their heirs, a piece of land in Holywell Field, in the said parish, containing 52 a. 3 r. 20 p., with the appurtenances, in trust, to pay the rents and profits thereof, by equal portions, at Midsummer and Christmas, to a schoolmaster of the Established Church, for instructing twenty poor children belonging to the said parish in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and religious knowledge, in the school-house lately erected there; with a proviso, that the trustees-for the time being should meet every first Monday in June at the school-room, for the purpose of electing a schoolmaster if necessary, and appointing the 20 poor children to be instructed as above, and naming a president for the year ensuing, and for passing all accounts relating to the said trust, and making all necessary regulations for the government of the said school; and with a further provision, that when any of the said trustees should die, or refuse to act, it should be lawful for the survivors, or any four or more of them, at any such annual meeting, to appoint one or other of the inhabitants, or owners, or occupiers of messuages, lands, and tenements in Castle Bytham, in the room of the trustee so dying, or refusing to act, and enter the name of the person so chosen in a book to be kept for that purpose,

and for the accounts and other proceedings of the charity.

"John Annabel occupies the 52a. 3r. 20p., on which there is a barn, as yearly tenant, at a rent of £40.

"To meet the expenses of the enclosure, and to build a barn on the charity premises, the parish, previous to the execution of the above abstracted deed, borrowed £100 from William Bartram, for which the trustees continue to pay 4 per cent. interest.

"Lord Willoughby and Mr. G. F. A. Heathcote contributed land, the former for the school-room and the latter for the school-house. In 1835 the charity applied accumulations, which had arisen from time to time, and then amounted to £50, in building a master's house. This consists of two stories, with two rooms on each floor, and is contiguous to the school-room. It was built at an expense of £63 6s. 6d. The charity has since been enabled to pay off the difference, and at the time of the inquiry (1837), there was a balance in hand of £7 14s. 1d.

"The master's salary is £35, for which he and a mistress, whom he provides, teach 30 boys and girls as directed in the above deed.

"Accordingly the future expenditure will be—

					£	s.	d.
Master	...	...	...	...	35	0	0
Interest on debt	...	...	...	...	4	0	0
					<hr/>		
					39	0	0
					<hr/>		
Balance...					£1	0	0

"The present trustees are John Coverley, John Piccaver, Richard Linney, Rev. William Tenant, Thomas Steel, and James Deroz (the latter being the only survivor of those originally appointed under the deed above abstracted)."

The school-room was rebuilt a few years ago, for which the sum of £200 was borrowed by the trustees. The rent of the land was then raised to £60 per annum, of which £40 are paid to the master, and the

remaining £20 are appropriated to the payment of interest and liquidation of the debt.

Mr. Ward is tenant. The trustees now are—Messrs. John Dawson, J. F. Richardson, J. N. Piccaver, R. Coverley, the Rev. J. Wild (curate in sole charge), and Mr. J. Berridge. Mr. W. Hamp is schoolmaster; and the number of children on the books is about 140.

CHAPTER XI.

VAUDEY ABBEY.

IN the year 1147, William le Gros, Earl of Albemarle, brought from Fountains Abbey, in Yorkshire, a number of Cistercian monks to found a priory at Castle Bytham.

Dugdale's account is as follows:—"In the year of the Incarnation of our Lord, 1147, in the county of Lincoln, there was founded at Biham, which having changed its name for a better, now called Vallis Dei, a celebrated house, and according to its name full of blessing. Its founder was William Earl of Albemarle, a man of great name and illustrious in his generation, who, after he had erected Melse, set about the establishment of this house. In the fifteenth year of the foundation of the monastery of Fountains, a convent of monks was sent under Abbot Warrine to the place now called Vallis Dei, on the 23rd day of May, in the same year of its foundation."¹

¹ Mon. Ang.
sub. Vaudey.

Thomas Stapleton, in his "History of the Holy Trinity Priory at York," says: "By William, Count of Aumarle, a convent of monks from Fountains had been seated in the vicinity of his Castle of Bytham, in Lincolnshire; but being found to be an inconvenient dwelling place, Gilbert de Gant, Earl of Lincoln, at the request of Pope Eugenius III., of Robert, Bishop of Lincoln, and of Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, granted to the Abbot Warine and his brethren another site, called Brachecourt, in the parish of Edenham, of his fief, in the same county, to which they were translated on the 23rd day of May, 1147."²

² Tom. 38.

Similarly, Tanner tells us that, in consequence of some inconveniences at Bytham, they quickly moved

their Abbey to a more pleasant place, in the parish of Edenham.³

³ Notitia,
p. 265.

All these accounts seem to imply that some settlement was really made at Bytham. If so, it could only be a temporary one. The time which elapsed before their translation to Vaudey was too short to allow of any permanent buildings being erected. But as the plan adopted at Meaux, in the selection of a site, appears to have been followed here also, some delay would necessarily ensue after their arrival. The singularly prudent monk Adam, who, as before related, had shown such an eye for the beautiful, and such disregard of his patron's plans and feelings in the matter of Meaux, undertook to spy out the land, and to choose the site for the Abbey. None could be found in the parish to satisfy his fastidious taste, though he discovered one not far off. It lay, however, in the territory of the Earl of Lincoln; and to procure it appears to have been no easy matter. The Pope, the Bishop of Lincoln, and St. Bernard, were induced to join their solicitations to those of the monks, and so the coveted valley was obtained.

About the year 1855, some human remains, stone coffins and fragments of window tracery, were discovered at Aunby. These disposed Mr. John Ross, the eminent antiquary of Lincoln, to think it probable that Aunby was the site intended for the Bytham monastery, and that the monks erected some buildings there. At first sight the supposition appears reasonable. Aunby was originally part of Bytham Manor, and the Earl might not wish to restrict their choice to a particular parish in that Manor. But had Mr. Ross examined the extensive traces of foundations still remaining at Aunby, he would not have entertained his supposition for an hour. The single consideration of time would alone have been fatal to it. Begin as early as the monks might in the spring, they could not have planned and erected, before the end of May, the buildings which formerly stood there. Another diffi-

culty lies in the uncertainty as to whether Aunby at that time belonged to the demesne of the Earl of Albemarle. It will be shown, in speaking of that hamlet, that it probably did not. Add further, that Bytham, and Bytham alone, is always spoken of as the intended site of the abbey, and we may safely dismiss the supposition that the foundations at Aunby had any connection with Bytham monastery.

The last site chosen by Adam of Fountains, for a religious foundation, was called our Lady's Hill. What so proper to his mind as that the next should be designated 'God's Valley'? Accordingly such was the name bestowed upon it. God's Valley is in Latin '*Vallis Dei*.' This was corrupted first into *Valdei*, and then into *Vaudey*, which became the common name both of the monastery and of the valley in which it stood.

Vaudey was built under the direction of the indefatigable Adam, who about the same time was superintending the erection of Woburne Abbey in Bedfordshire, and Kirkstead in this county.⁴

⁴ Dug. Bar.
Vol. i. p. 62.

We have then to thank this "singularly prudent" man that Bytham does not possess the venerable ruins of a monastery as well as those of a castle. English churchmen owe many a grudge against rapacious monks. They can, however, value the remains of their ancient dwellings, appreciate the wondrous beauty of their buildings, both in style and ornament, and admire, with reverence, the self-denying zeal of many of their inmates, who, voluntarily giving up the world with its pomps and vanities, consecrated themselves exclusively to Christ, and faithfully kept their vows.

Monasteries were, perhaps, peculiarly adapted to the lawless, warlike age in which they flourished in this country. In them an asylum was found for the weak and gentle, for the devout and studious, and thus they became the nurseries of learning, and in some degree of piety. But it was utterly

impossible that corruption should not invade them ; and, once within their pent-up walls, it would rage like fever in the hold of a vessel.

From a charter of confirmation by Richard I., we learn that though the monks refused to settle at Castle Bytham, as the Earl of Albemarle wished, he was still a most liberal benefactor to them. He gave them in the territory of Bytham (at Little Bytham) the South Grange, containing 600 acres of arable land, and the wood called Ousthage, with the land on which it stood, and the site of a certain mill,* with all things thereto belonging.

Among other benefactors, Geoffrey de Brachecurt must always be mentioned. He gave to these monks all he had at Brachecurt, on condition that they supplied him and his wife, during their life-time, with all things necessary for diet and clothing, linen and woollen, and for two servants. For himself and his wife they were to provide the same quantity and quality of diet as they did for two monks, and for two servants as for two of their own. The clothing for him was to be of Griseng or Halberget and lamb-skins; and for his wife the dearest was to be Bluet and lamb-skins. Gilbert de Gant, Earl of Lincoln, and Roger de Mowbray were also liberal benefactors.

In the time of Richard I., or within fifty years of the date of their foundation, they had possessions in Edenham, Lutterbie, Manthorpe, Irnham, Boleby (Bulby), Swinstead, Fleet, Bicker, East Deeping, Biham, Witham, Ingoldsby, Heydour, Asserby, Welleby (Welby), Burton, Stoke, Billesfield, Corby, Salteby, Easton, Chilington, Sewsterne, Little Dalby and Great Dalby.

The Abbey was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, maintained an abbot with thirteen monks, and continued till the suppression. In the 30th year of the reign of Henry VIII. the site and its possessions were granted

* This mill is mentioned in Domesday.

by the King to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk. Its annual value was variously estimated at from £80 to £177 15s. 7d.

In 1537 King Henry VIII., in one of his progresses through this part of his kingdom, proposed staying with his brother-in-law, the Duke of Suffolk, at Grimsthorpe, which he did from the 5th to the 8th of August. To prepare for his royal guest, the Duke is said to have pulled down the Abbey to enlarge his castle. It is quite possible that he might do so; for all monasteries having a less income than £200 per annum, as this had, were dissolved in 1535; though, according to Dugdale, the site was not granted to him till the year 1538.*

* Appendix, ii.

Spelman, in his "History and Fate of Sacrilege,"⁵ speaking of this Duke of Suffolk, says: "This despoiler of *thirty* monasteries was married four times." He then recounts the fate of his six children—three sons and three daughters—and concludes with these words: "A more remarkable instance could scarcely be found wherein, in the next generation, a man's name has been clean put out."

Some remains of the foundations of the Abbey may still be seen in Grimsthorpe Park, about a mile from the Castle, but they are fast crumbling away.

Under the date June 30th, 1736, Dr. Stukeley communicated to the Spalding Antiquarian Society some drawings made that week at Grimsthorpe, particularly of the site of Vaudey Abbey. They were accompanied by the following remarks: "Vaudey Abbey⁶ claims an especial regard from us of Stamford. They promoted the University here, and founded one of the Colleges.† The gate-house of the Abbey remains, and that the only part. It looks towards Grimsthorpe House, and is now made the keeper's

⁶ Minutes of the Spalding Antiquarian Society. Vol. iv. pp. 36 and 37.

* Fuller speaks of Grimsthorpe as an extemporary structure, raised suddenly, to entertain King Henry VIII.

† Called Vaudey Hall. See Walcot's Memorials of Stamford, p. 29.

house. It was a great gate, beams of timber at the top. On one side a lesser gate, or common passage, an arch of stone. The top building of this gate, or logging above, is of stud-work in timber. This was generally the manner of building in our Stamford Colleges. . . . The foundation of the wall that encompassed the whole Abbey, called the precincts, is very visible quite around. It went over the top of the hill east of the Abbey, and stretched to the top of the hill west of the Abbey, taking in the valley where the upper ponds are, and the wide valley beneath, where the Abbey stood, well sheltered under that eastern hill. The foundations of the ruins of the Abbey generally remain, from the gate-house to the dove-cot, now become a coney-warren. Some part of the chapel wall still standing. Mr. Owen, the Duke of Ancaster's chaplain, found some painted glass there. Those upper ponds are furnished from two springs. The nearest, just without the western precincts, was repaired last year by the Duke. There is a vault under-ground, 5 feet high, now in water. The stankhead seems to have been made since the time of the Abbey. Higher still is another spring, lately repaired by the Duke; 'tis called still the Virgin's Well, formerly consecrated to the Blessed Virgin, as the church of the Abbey was. In the middle of the western precincts is an artificial hill, or tumulus. Hereabouts was the Close, the Gardens and Walks of the religious. It must have been a very delicious place, having a prospect all around this fine park. On the south side the precincts, all along the wall, the old walk may be discerned; and, hanging over the Abbey, was the Abbot's garden. On the north of the Abbey, upon the hill, was a very old seat called Bishop's Hall. The Duke still works the quarries of black marble, which once belonged to the Abbey."

I regret to add that none of the Doctor's drawings appear to have been preserved; or, perhaps, they were merely lent for the Society's inspection.

Had opportunity permitted, I purposed to have gone over the site of the Abbey, with the above account in my hand, and to have noted its present state. I must confess, however, with sorrow, that since it was determined to send these pages to press, I have never had time at my disposal to do so.

CHAPTER XII.

HOLYWELL.

"We find rare spots on earth,
Where art and nature strive in sweet accord
To charm the eye and captivate the soul."

SUCH a spot is Holywell. Woodland and water, grassy slopes and winding valleys, offered capabilities which culture, guided by exquisite taste, has wrought into exceeding loveliness. And although there are no crumbling ruins peeping through its ivy-clad trees, shedding the mystic influence of holy associations, or breathing a spirit of chivalry, it has its relic of the past in another form. A little *well* gathers round itself a sacred interest. Local tradition tells us that near this well there was formerly a religious house, that holy women lived here, and that by bathing the eyes of the blind in its waters, sight was restored. However this may be, an ancient well certainly exists; and so long as its dark, placid waters rest in their shady retreat, that bitter foe of holy legend—half-told history—will never rob them of their sacred repute.

Let us confess at once that we have no authentic records of the existence of a nunnery at Holywell; that it is no part of our plan to prove or disprove the tradition; that our only object is to collect facts and place them in a chronological and connected order; and if the attempt to do this should lead to unexpected results, let us still follow and evolve the teaching of the facts.

Place-names in general are seldom changed. Unlike swallows, and a certain class of friends, they

can endure both cold and poverty; it is not convenient to the world at large that men should play fast and loose with them; and therefore, when once settled, they adhere to village or district with marvellous constancy. Still, changes do sometimes take place. Medeshamstede, after the erection of a monastery there, dedicated to St. Peter, became St. Peter's Burg, and finally Peterborough. A famous battle between the Saxons and Danes took place in A.D. 870, at a place then called Laundon. Three of the Danish kings were slain and buried in the village, and Laundon has ever since been known as Threckingham,—the 'Three Kings' Village.¹ In like manner Holywell has superseded an older name.

¹ Ingulph.
p. 42.

At the present day, in the neighbourhood of Castle Bytham, we certainly have no parish or hamlet known as Bredestorp. Yet in Domesday, within the Wapentake of Beltislaw and Soke of Westbitham, is a place bearing that name. It is described as follows:—

“Beltislaw Wapentake.

“In Bredestorp Earl Morcar had 7 carucates of taxable land. Land, 7 carucates. Soke in Westbitham.* There the men Ingelran and Ernulfus have 1 carucate, 6 sochmen, 1 villain, and 5 borderers with 2 carucates. There is one mill of the value of 4 shillings, and 200 acres of lesser wood. In the time of King Edward the Confessor its value was £3; now it is 40 shillings. Tax 12 shillings.”

Here alone we see a considerable amount of presumptive evidence as to the identity of Bredestorp with Holywell.

1. It was in the Wapentake of Beltislaw. No such name appears in that division now.
2. It was in the Soke of Westbitham, which indicates its close proximity to that parish. There

* That is, it was within the Liberty, or under the jurisdiction, of the Lord of Westbitham.

is no hamlet or territorial division near Bytham bearing that or any similar name.

3. Like Bytham, it belonged to Earl Morcar before the Conquest, and then passed with Bytham and his other lands to Drogo de Breverer.
4. Drogo's possessions were given to the Earl of Albemarle. Among that nobleman's lands we find Helewell, but not Bredestorp; and Helewell occupies the precise position of Bredestorp. It is a portion or member of the Manor of Bytham.

These reasons alone appear conclusive as to the change of name. We can now show further that the change was gradual and significant.

Among the possessions of the Monastery of Peterborough, in the time of King Henry I., is "Bredestorp 4 carucates and a half in demesne, and a half (carucate) socage."² This, as Mr. Stapleton points out, is identical with another entry in Domesday, viz.: "In Adewell, St. Peter of Burg had and has 5 carucates of land subject to Danegeld."* ² Lib. Nig. Mon. Peterb., 178.

Bredestorp then had another name. The whole or part of it was known as Adewell.

Now, putting these facts together, and adding the subsequent fact, that in the time of Henry III. it was known as Helewell, we are, I think, justified in the following inference:—

In Bredestorp was a well, which for some reason or other became notorious, and was known in conjunction with a personal name, then represented by the dissyllable Ade. Ade is a Saxon prefix which enters into the composition of female names, and signifies *noble*, as *Adeleve*, noble wife; *Adelfeda*, &c. Hele (in Helewell) is the representative of the Anglo-Saxon verb *hælan*, to cure. We thus discover in these

* This land was given to the Monastery before the Conquest by Halfdene, the son of Brenctinus. (Hugo Candidus, p. 43.)

names the probable groundwork of every part of the local tradition connected with the holy well. Some female recluse in Anglo-Saxon times took up her abode here, and gathered a sisterhood around her. Her name was afterwards attached to the well to give it an odour of sanctity. It was next known as the Healing Well. And when Ade . . . was forgotten, and miracles of healing were no longer wrought or feigned, tradition preserved its reputation for sanctity. It became the Holy Well, and gave its present name to the village.

The first owner of Holywell whose name we have met with was Halfdene. The next, at the time of the Conquest, was Earl Morcar, or Morkere. After the Conquest, it was given to Drogo de Breverer ; and when he fled the country it became, as part of the Manor of Bytham, the property of Stephen Earl of Albemarle.

Thus, in the time of Hen. III., the Earl of Albemarle held Helewell of the King in right of his barony, and had held it since the Conquest.³

³ Testa de Nevill, p. 327.

In 1 Edward I. (1273) it descended, with the other vast possessions of the Earls of Albemarle and Devon, to Aveline, daughter and sole heiress of William de Fortibus, the last Earl of Albemarle, and Isabel his wife, daughter and heiress of Baldwin Earl of Devon. This Aveline espoused Edmund Plantagenet, second son of Edward I., the King, Queen, and almost all the nobility of England being present at the wedding. Edmund, doing fealty, had livery of all her possessions. But about three years later, "the King, having a mind to all her castles and lands, came to an agreement with her for them." The terms of this agreement were, "That she should, by sufficient assurance, pass them unto him and his heirs, as well the Isle of Wight, as other ; with the advowsons and patronage of churches and religious houses ; as also the knights' fees of her inheritance, excepting the lordships of Sevenhampton, Whit-Hechurch, Harewood, and

Croft: and he to enfeof her of lands and tenements, according to the full extent and worth of those lands and advowsons, wherein she had only estate for term of life, to hold to her and her heirs, until she should have an exchange made to the full value; and moreover to pay her in money the sum of twenty thousand marks, for the grant and confirmation of the premises, which grant was by her accordingly made." ⁴ *Dug. Bar.*
 Thus Holywell became part of the royal possessions. ⁵ *Vol. i. p. 65.*

While probably still a royal demesne, its quarries, ⁶ *Rot. Hund.*
 together with those of Careby, were so celebrated ³ *Ed. i. n. 4.*
 that stone was taken from them for some of the works ^{m. i.}
 in progress at Windsor Castle. What the works
 were is not specified in the documents from which
 I quote, but I have heard it stated that they were
 connected with St. George's Chapel there. The
 document in question is dated 15th October, 1363
 (37 Ed. III.), ⁸ and by it the King appoints William ⁸ *Rymer's*
 de Careby, clerk, and Robert de Paunton, jointly and ^{Fœdera. Sub.}
 severally, to choose so many quarrymen and other ^{Ann.}
 workmen, as they should deem sufficient to quarry the
 King's stone in the quarries of Helewell and Careby,
 and to carry it to a place called Catebrigge (? Cam-
 bridge). From Catebrigge it was to be conveyed
 by Simon Huet and Gilbert Burd to the Castle
 at Windsor.

Our next mention of Holywell is in 4 Richard II.,
 when Roger Belers, Knight, held it, together with the
 Manor of Strætton, in the county of Rutland. ⁷ Then ⁷ *Esc. Sub.*
 a John Hussey had, together with the Manor of ^{Anno.}
 Holywell, ten houses and as many cottages in Holy-
 well and Stamford; and another item of information
 tells us that he held all the houses, lands, and tene-
 ments in Holywell of the King *in capite*. This was
 most probably the John Hussey who was created
 Lord Hussey of Sleaford, in the reign of Henry
 VIII.; but as both the entries relating to him are
 without date, this cannot be positively asserted.

In 3 and 4 Philip and Mary (1556), William

Hussey, Knight, held the Manors of Leek, Leverton, Skyrbeck, and Hallawell, also 18 messuages. Nela, wife of Richard Disney, and Anna, wife of Francis Columbell, were his daughters and heirs.⁸ From the Harlean manuscripts⁹ we learn that this was Sir William Hussey of Beauvale, in the county of Nottingham, son of the Lord Hussey of Sleaford, who was beheaded. He died on the 19th of January, 1555. He held also at the time of his death the Manor of Stretton.

In the 10th of Elizabeth (1568), Anna Columbell, then a widow, bought of Hugh Selborne the whole of his portion of the Manor of Hallywell, with its appurtenances.¹⁰

In the 17th of the same reign, Robert Goodlake, *alias* Goodhall, purchased of Siriacus Disney, *one chief messuage* of the Manor of Hollywell, within the parish of Castle Bytham, and 17 messuages in the same place.¹¹ No doubt the Manor was purchased at the same time, but when the transfer should have been completed it was discovered that there was some flaw in Disney's title; for two later years he procured the Queen's pardon for obtaining for himself of John Hussey, the Manor of Holywell, without Her Majesty's licence.¹² We may presume, therefore, that when Lord Hussey was in trouble, he transferred Holywell in some irregular way; that when Disney wished to sell it the fraud was discovered; and that when, by fine or otherwise, he had procured a lawful title, he sold it to Robert Goodhall. Certainly the Goodhalls were the next owners of the Manor, and continued to hold it until the 25th of January, 1728, when it was sold by William Goodhall to Lady Mary Barnadiston, who in the same year settled it upon her brother, Samuel Reynardson, Esq.,¹³ whose descendant, C. T. S. Birch Reynardson, Esq., still owns it, and resides in its beautiful mansion.

The CHURCH OF HOLYWELL, dedicated to St. Mary, was originally, and for many centuries con-

⁸ Esc. Sub. Anno.

⁹ No. 756, p. 465.

¹⁰ Esc. Sub. Anno.

¹¹ Esc. 17 Eliz., pt. 2.

¹² Ibid., 19 Eliz. pt. 4.

¹³ Abstract of Title Deeds.

tinued to be, a Chapelry belonging to the Parish Church of Castle Bytham. The first distinct mention of it that I have met with is the appointment of a Master Richard Ringstede "to the portion of the Church of Biham existing in Helewell." This was in A.D. 1275; and the church was of a still earlier date, for Ringstede succeeded a Master Roger Hendernas, a former rector, then lately deceased.

The site of the old church being too low, or the number of springs increased, it was found necessary, at the close of the 17th century, to remove both the edifice and the burial-ground.

To obtain the required authority for this purpose, the subjoined petition was forwarded to the Chancellor of the Diocese:—

"To the Right Worshipful Doctor William Oldys, Chancellor of the Diocese of Lincoln: The Humble Petition of Robert Goodhall, Esq., and others, inhabitants within the village of Holywell, in the parish of Castle Bytham, &c., sheweth, that the Chappell of Ease att Holywell is situate in a peece of ground contayning half an acre, which for many years last past hath happened to be so full of quick springs that the graves for burying the dead there either within or without the said chappell are commonly full of water before the corps of such as are to be buried there can be interred, and likewise the floor of the said chapell is frequently so overflown that neither the minister or inhabitants aforesaid can come into the said chappell to prayers and other divine duties without wading to their seats. And whereas the aforementioned Robert Goodhall, Esq., owner of several lands and grounds within the said village, out of his pious inclination and for remedying the grievances aforesaid, is willing to give a very convenient peece of ground, and larger in quantity than that on which the said chappell now stands, and (having the peece of ground on which the said chappell now stands in lieu and change) to

settle the same for ever for the said chappell yard. And moreover, att his owne proper costs and charges, to remove the said chappell, with all the material thereof, and rebuild the same in all things as amply and fitly as the same was before, and otherwise to doo as to your discretion shall seem most fitt. Therefore we humbly pray your worship in order thereto that a commission of view may bee granted, that the proceedings to this good work may have its desired end, and your petitioners shall ever pray, &c.—ROBERT GOODHALL, Senr., THOMAS BALY, ROBERT PARKINSON, &c.”

The commission of view was issued to Francis Pretious, vicar of Castle Bytham and of Holywell; Robert ffish, rector of Little Bytham; William Cawthorne, rector of Careby; Joseph Bagnell, rector of Creeton; William Stilton, rector of Corby; and Joseph LLOYD, rector of Irnham.

The three first-named of these Commissioners visited the chapel, and found “the walls thereof very much decayed by reason of ffresh springs arising therein, &c.” They “likewise viewed the place sett out for the building of a new chappell upon, and judge it very convenient for that purpose, &c.” This return of the Commissioners bears date 24th January, 1699. The matter was then brought before the Consistorial Court, witnesses were examined, and finally a Decree of the Court was issued on the 4th of April, 1701, authorising the removal of the chapel from its former site and rebuilding it on the proposed new one, within the space of one year following the Feast of St. John the Baptist next ensuing.¹⁴

¹⁴ A document penes C. T. S. Birch Reynardson, Esq.

The old church is stated in the above-quoted document to have been within two furlongs of the Water Mill.

By an Order in Council, dated 19th June, 1844, the Chapelry of Holywell-cum-Aunby was separated from the united Rectory and Parish Church of Little

Bytham, and Vicarage and Parish Church of Great Bytham, otherwise Castle Bytham, and united for ecclesiastical purposes to the rectory and parish of Careby, so that the said rectory of Careby and the said chapelry should form one benefice by the name and style of the Rectory of Careby, with the Chapelry of Holywell-cum-Aunby annexed.¹⁵

¹⁵ A document penes the Rev. J. B. Reynardson.

AUNBY.

THIS hamlet originally formed part of the Manor of Bytham, as is shown by the Hundred Rolls,¹ and, together with the other members of that Manor, became the property of the Earls of Albemarle shortly after the Conquest. ¹ Vol. i. p. 260.

In the time of Henry I. the Monastery of Peterborough owned 4 carucates of land here. Like Holywell, it was then known by another name, but its identity is sufficiently clear. Connected with the entry, which has been shown to refer to Holywell, is this: "Bitham Manor 2 carucates in demesne and 2 carucates socage." Again in Domesday we have the following: "Berewick of Bergestorp is in Bitham, of 4 carucates of land, subject to Danegeld. This land is the demesne of St. Peter of Burgh." In both these entries the land is said to be in Bitham Manor: in both it consists of 4 carucates, and in both it is said to belong to the Abbey of Peterborough. We must therefore regard them as two descriptions of the same property. And to no part of Bytham Manor, save Aunby, can the description apply. We thus gather that in the reign of Henry I., although the Manor of Aunby belonged to the Earl of Albemarle, the Monastery of Peterborough owned in it 400 acres of land.

Our next mention of this hamlet shows that the Colviles obtained it from the Earls of Albemarle at an early date. Judging from the language of the

Hundred Rolls, it is not improbable that they were in possession of Aunby before they obtained the Manor of Bytham; for in speaking of them in connection with the latter place, its language is clear and precise. It tells us that William de Mandeville granted the Manor of Bytham to William de Colvile; whereas, in speaking of Aunby (Ouneby), it merely relates that "Walter de Colvile and his ancestors held it of the ancestors of William de Fortibus Earl of Albemarle." These vague expressions are unsatisfactory; but if they point in any direction, it is certainly to the earlier occupation of Aunby. Comparing this with the mention of the Colviles previously transcribed from Peck, it suggests the possibility of their having *a residence* AT AUNBY, and so being neighbours of, as they were certainly intimate with, the great families at Stamford, before William de Colvile became Baron of Bytham. If so, we have the clue to the true character of the extensive foundations at Aunby: the original residence of the Colviles was there.

The probabilities in favour of this suggestion will multiply as we proceed. The first is from the Hundred Roll quoted above, which tells us that in 3 Edward I., Adam de St. Lando (or, as it is more frequently spelt, Laudo) was in possession of the Manor of Ouneby, with its appurtenances, which he held of Lord Walter de Colvile for the service of half a knight's fee. It was then worth £10 per annum, and was taxed in yearly aid to the Sheriff at three shillings. From this it appears, that shortly after the Colviles obtained the Castle at Bytham as their residence, they placed a tenant in Aunby. They would not be likely to do this unless there was a mansion there.

Forty years later, that is, in 9 Edward II. (1315), it is enumerated among the possessions of Lord Edmund de Colvile, who held the Manor, then valued

² Esc. 9 Ed. II. at £39 5s., and three parts of a knight's fee in it.³

From this time we lose sight of it for upwards of two centuries. But as it then re-appears in connection with Castle Bytham, Little Bytham, and Careby, among the possessions of Germanus Pole, in 1553,³ Esc. 6 Ed. VI. we may presume that it had, during that period, been considered part of Bytham Manor, and passed as such.

On the 7th of June, 4 James I. (1606), William Bodenden, Esq., of Ryhall, purchased of Thomas Harrington, Esq., of South Witham, all the lands, meadows, feeding pastures, &c., called by the name of Sheep-gate, with their appurtenances, and 200 acres of land and heath, 20 acres of meadow, and other lands, tenements, and hereditaments, with their appurtenances, lying in Aunby and Careby.⁴

⁴ Abstract of
Title Deeds.

On the 25th of October, 1616, Sir Francis Bodenden sold all his property in Aunby and Careby to Thomas Earl of Exeter for £1,400.⁵

⁵ Ibid.

We now meet with a very curious document, giving us full particulars as to the state of Aunby at that time. I give it literally: "10 September 24 James (1626), Whereas the village of Aunby was first constituted from y^e ancient use of Pasture for sheep, Beasts, and a warren of Conyes, with a shepherd's and warrener's lodge onely thereon, to bee broken up for corne, and used in tillage and building of houses fitt for husbandry and other necessities there convenient. All which condition and plantation it was agreed between the inhabitants of Holywell and Aunby (which were first planters, tennants, and occupiers thereof) that for and touching such Rites and duties as should accrue and fall due to the King's Majesty by any weekly, monthly, or yearly taxacion, payable every quarter Sessions, or otherwise, and by any Record known, then a certain common charge, that to all such duties and payments the ffarmers and occupiers of all such new erected houses of husbandry should only pay a third part equally to be divided into three parts, but for all other payments

that might arise and grow due to His Highness by his Prerogative, Proclamation, or otherwise accidentally growing due to his Person as an uncertain and then unknown charge or corporall servitude about his Person, that to all such payments they shall equally beare by Moyties as anciently they have done in his Highnesses great provision and other charges of that nature and kind.

“Persons consenting to this agreement,

RO. GOODHALL
JOHN HELLAM

ROBT. WALLETT
ANTH. WALLETT
STEPHEN LOVATT.

“The original of this draught being somewhat impayred by long continuance of time, &c., These are therefore to certify whom it may hereafter concern, that wee, whose names are hereunto subscribed, did strictly compaire and examine y^e originall (which then was legible) and this draught together and found them upon y^e said perusall exactly alike in sense, nature, strength, and kind. In witness whereof we have hereunto sett our hands this 3 day of May in y^e 32 year of the Raighn of our Sovereign Lord King Charles y^e Second over England.”⁶

⁶ Document
penes C. T. S. B.
Reynardson,
Esq.

Strange to say, no signatures are appended.

On the 20th March, 1650, the Dowager Countess of Exeter and others sold for £1,300, Aunby sheepwalk, containing about 800 acres in Aunby, Careby, and Essendine, to Robert Harrington and his heirs, and to John Balguy; and in the next year John Balguy bought the portions belonging to the before-named Robert and James Harrington.⁷

⁷ Abst. of Title
Deeds.

On the 14th of June, 1672, John Hatcher purchased Aunby of John Balguy.⁸ This John Hatcher was then in possession of Careby, which had been purchased (by his grandfather probably) 52 years before. Careby and Aunby thus became united, and remained in the Hatcher family till, by the marriage of one of its coheireses with . . . Reynardson,

⁸ Ibid.

Esq., of Holywell, both Careby and Aunby passed into that family, and still belong to them.

About the year 1855, Mr. Chambers, of Aunby, in levelling some ground to enlarge his stackyard, discovered 33 skeletons and 4 stone coffins, together with some fragments of mullions and of the tracery of windows. There was also found a coat of arms enclosed in a vesica,* which is now in Careby Church. In the same church, near the altar, is the effigy of a knight, which is also supposed to have come from Aunby. These things, taken in connection with the traces of extensive foundations still visible there, show that Aunby must, at some time or other, have been a place of considerable importance. There was either a monastery there, a parochial church, or a large dwelling, with a private chapel and burial-place attached to it.

The first of these suppositions has been sufficiently answered in speaking of Vaudey.

As regards the second, our evidence is clear and consistent. Not only is there no mention of a church at Aunby, but we find distinct statements, as in the extract from the Institutions of Bishop Oliver Sutton, that it was dependent upon and served by the church of Holywell.

There remains then only the third alternative—Was there ever a large mansion at Aunby? I have already suggested such a probability. Monastery there was not, church there was not, and yet there was something. That something was not a recent building, as the remains sufficiently attest. It was not standing when the agreement was made between the inhabitants of Holywell and Aunby in 1626. Nor do we find anything which will justify such a supposition till we come to the Hundred Rolls, as quoted above. In 1274-5, Adam de Saint Laudo was in possession of Aunby, as subinfeudatory of

* Or, two bars gules, in chief 3 pellets.

Lord Walter de Colville, and had come there under circumstances strongly suggestive of there being a residence upon the manor. All the remains—the stone coffins, the tracery of windows, and the effigy—agree with this period. Till, then, more positive evidence disproves my conclusions, I shall regard the foundations and the remains discovered at Aunby as belonging to an ancient residence with a private chapel and burial-place, which was occupied by the Colvilles till about A.D. 1180, and sometime during the following century by the Saint Laudos.

ADDENDA.

Gilbert de Gant, Earl of Lincoln, departed this life A.D. 1162, and was buried in the Abbey of Vaudey, Lincolnshire.¹

¹ Mon. Ang.
vol. i. p. 834.

In the 4th year of Edward I., Gocelinus de Swynested, bailiff, caused the dead body of a young man to be buried in the field of Bytham, without view of the coroner, at the request of the inhabitants, and for so doing received from them four shillings.²

² Rot. Hund.
4 Ed. II. m. 9.

About the year 1320, William Harraz held in West Bitham one messuage and one bovaté of land, of the honour of Albemarle.³

³ Inquis.
14 Ed. II. m. 19.

In 14 Edward II. (1320), John, son of John Goband, on payment of a fine of thirty shillings, acquired possession of certain tenements in West Bitham.⁴

⁴ Abbrev. Rot.
Orig. vol. i.
p. 258.

In 15 Richard II. (1391), died Anketil Mallory, seised conjointly with Alice his wife, of the manor of Bytham.⁵

⁵ Esc. sub.
anno.

Baldwin Wake holds in Deeping, Plumtre, and Stove (Stowe?) two knights' fees; and Robert de Gunges holds of the same Baldwin, in Lincolnshire, that is to say, in Caréby and Bytham, nine carucates of land. (Time of the Conqueror.)⁶

⁶ Hist. Cen.
Burg. Hug.
Candidi. p. 58.

Careby, with its appurtenances, is the fee of Robert de Guineges. (Time of the Conqueror.)

Anthony Williams and John Coniers, of London, gentlemen, on the 10th of March, 1553, made request to purchase: Rents in Careby, late of the chantry there . . . Farms in Grantham, Belton . . . and Bytham, late parcel of the jointure of Catherine, Queen of England, and formerly belonging to the monasteries of Swineshead and Sempringham.⁷

⁷ Inventory of Particulars for Grants.

On the 6th of August, 1552, Thomas Cecill and Philip Bold made request to purchase farms in Little Bytham, late parcel of the lands and possessions granted for the observance of divers obits and luminaries in Lincolnshire.⁸

⁸ Ibid.

In Bishop Neal's time, A.D. 1616, the value of Little Bytham living was £30. Humphrey Marsh was rector; the Bishop of Lincoln patron; and the number of communicants 65.⁹

⁹ Will's MSS. fo. 39.

Certain lands and tenements in Little Bytham were given by an unknown person for the support of one light in the church for ever, viz., the firm of 3 roods of meadow in the plains of the said vill, in the tenure of Richard Jackson at will, for a rent of two shillings per annum.¹⁰

¹⁰ Holles.

Little Bytham, Church Estate. "By the award on the enclosure of Little Bytham, dated 15 July, 1804, 11 acres and 2 roods were allotted to the churchwardens. This land is let to John Sharp, as yearly tenant, at a rent of £16, which is carried to the church-rate."¹¹

¹¹ Report of Charity Commissioners, p. 326.

The population of Castle Bytham has progressed as follows:—In 1801, it was 372; in 1821, it was 577; in 1841, it was 672; in 1851, it was 647; and in 1862, it was 875.

Counthorpe. Here was a chapel, called Counthorpe Chapel, "covered with thatch and turf . . . and in the last stage of ruin;" so said the Commissioners for the suppression of chantries, &c., in the time of Edward VI.

In the churchyard at Castle Bytham are two stone coffins, one on the south side of the church, and the other against the north wall of the chancel. The former was dug up in removing the soil for draining the south side of the church. Probably each had contained the remains of some member of the Colville family.

The field now in the occupation of Mr. J. Wing, and adjoining the New Inn, was formerly known as the Cinder Hill. It is said that hundreds of cart-loads of cinders have been taken away from it for various purposes. Is this the site of the *Three Iron Forges* mentioned in Domesday, and their successors—the village smithies—for generations afterwards? It appears more than probable when we learn that, in the next field lying to the south-east and extending to the Fishpools, numerous foundations and floors of cottages have been ploughed up; such, I have been assured, is the fact; and that half a century ago the lower part of that field was known as "The Pode Hole." If, therefore, the smithies and a number of dwellings formerly stood here, we must suppose that this was anciently the site of the village, and that, after the destruction of the Castle, it took up its present position in the valley, where it is more sheltered and nearer the springs.

In the year 1700, arable land was let in Bytham at 3s. 4d. per acre, and continued uniformly at that rate for the next sixty years. Then a three-acre piece, on changing hands, was raised to 5s. 6d. per acre. The next advance was on a smaller piece, for which 4s. per acre was charged. In 1778, the last

year of the old account book, two tenants who had held their land thirty-eight years, still had it at 3s. 4d. per acre; all the others were charged 4s. 6d.

¹² Vol. ii.
p. 249.

In Gough's Camden ¹² is the following:—"A little of Bitham riseth of certain springs a broket, and about a ford joineth the broke that divideth the shires, and not far of is Robin Huddes' cross a limes of the shires."
... "Over a cross on a gravestone on the church-wall—

hobæn hæstæm.

I began to search for this gravestone; and after a time found not the stone I was looking for, but another of perhaps greater interest. It was built into a barn-wall, and on its outer surface were traces of an inscription. By the kind permission of R. Heathcote, Esq., I removed it, and found that it was part of the shaft of a cross. The letters are probably—

DE NAFNO GRAP

This, however, cannot be positively asserted, as they are evidently only a portion of the original inscription, and some of them are nearly obliterated. On the reverse was an incised cross, and on one side a flowing pattern somewhat similar to those on Runic crosses. The other side was so worn that no traces of workmanship were visible. Each angle was of twisted, or cable-work. Further search brought to light two other and smaller pieces of the same cross. On one of them was an incised star or flower, and the angles had the cable-work, but in other respects both were sadly mutilated.

These interesting remains are said to be part of a St. Cuthbert's Cross, and to date from about A.D. 950 to 1050. They are therefore the oldest and only Saxon relics known to exist in Castle Bytham, and are not at all unlikely to be portions of the very cross which in Camden's time was known as Robin Hood's Cross.

As the letters are only a portion of the original inscription, and some of them are indistinct, it is impossible to give a satisfactory solution of them. They have been supposed to mean "From Navenby Graffo."

I should be ungrateful indeed were I close these pages without offering my warmest thanks to the many friends who have so kindly assisted me in various ways. To some I am indebted for the loan of valuable books and manuscripts, to others for help of other kinds. Where obligations are so numerous, it is impossible to individualise; I must therefore beg each and all who have in any way assisted me in this little work to accept my best thanks.



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